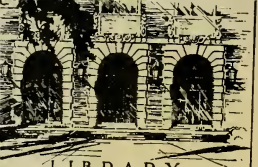

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THE TRIALS OF LIFE.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "DE LISLE."

All suffering doth destroy, or is destroy'd,
Even by the sufferer; and, in each event
Ends:—Some, with hope replenish'd and rebuoy'd,
Return to whence they came—with like intent,
And weave their web again; some, bow'd and bent,
Wax gray and ghastly, withering ere their time,
And perish with the reed on which they leant;
Some seek devotion, toil, war, good or crime,
According as their souls were form'd to sink or climb.

4th CANTO OF CHILDE HAROLD.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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TO

CAROLINE

DUCHESS OF ARGYLE,

THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE (BY PERMISSION)

MOST RESPECTFULLY

DEDICATED

WITH EVERY SENTIMENT OF ADMIRATION AND

GRATITUDE,

BY HER GRACE'S

MOST OBEDIENT HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

18 Jan 52 Rodda

LORD AMESFORT'S FAMILY.

CHAPTER I.

In a thickly wooded fertile vale in a western county of England, the ancient castle of the Earls of Amesfort reared its lofty battlements. The venerable pile had almost the appearance of a ruin, but so extensive was the range of building, and so much was concealed by the massy foliage of spreading cedars, that the present Earl had it in his power to exercise the rights of hospitality upon nearly as large a scale as his ancestors, who, in feudal days, had so oft convened their vassals, and marshalled them on the verdant lawn without the castle gates, prepared alike for defence or aggression, as cir-

cumstances, or the caprice of their liege Lord dictated.

It was not the clamorous mirth of boors that now echoed in the festive hall: the voices that rung through its arched roofs bore on the ambient air no sound of war and rapine, although its walls were yet covered with ancient weapons of defence, and its warlike appearance scarce suited the present moment of peaceful rejoicing. The heir to Amesfort Castle had attained his fifth year, and for the first time since the marriage of the Earl, that nobleman revisited the abode of his youth, and presented his boy to those over whom he would one day preside.

It was a beautiful summer evening, and the rich vale glowed beneath the influence of a setting sun, whose beams caught yet more strongly projecting parts of the massy building, or glittered at intervals on the blue waters of a rivulet, which, deep in the hollow, broke over fragments of rock and stones, with a soothing murmur. A slight shower had refreshed the verdure, and given fragrance to the shrubs: sounds of music from unseen performers floated on the air; and

to complete the landscape, slowly winding round a distant eminence, a group appeared, not unworthy the pencil of Guido. A young girl, of the most picturesque appearance, was carefully conducting an ass, which bore on its patient back a child hardly eight years old. They were preceded by two figures of peculiar interest; one springing into manhood, erect and noble, proud in superior strength and conscious rectitude, tenderly, yet reverently supporting the feeble steps of the other, in whose fragile outline and faded features, traces were yet visible of a beautiful female. She was still young; the gazer would have said, far too young to be the mother of him on whose arm she leant; but then he had not watched her full blue eye rest upon him, in the agony of that hope which borders on despair; that look which reveals the incessant solicitude and smothered anxiety of maternal love.

For a moment the party paused, ere they descended into the vale. The young girl leant carelessly against the animal she was guiding, and Adolphus gathered flowers by the side of

the bank, that had caught the fancy of the child. Did she who stood alone on the verge of the dell rejoice in the vivid colours of the horizon? Did her eye dwell on the beauty of the scene, and her ear take in with gladness the notes of joy that rose from the valley? One look of recognition she took of spots once dear; busy memory peopled the landscape with forms long numbered with the dead; one short moment brought back a period she had almost deemed forgotten, but the ghost of former times only for a fleeting instant usurped the place of present sorrow, and, recalled to herself, she bowed her head upon her breast, silently wiped off the tear that had gathered in her eye, and uncomplainingly pursued her way.

They reached the castle gates, and a shudder crept over the frame of Emily Montresor. Her son felt the arm tremble that rested on his, and fondly he pressed it to his own beating heart. Adolphus sympathised keenly in the sorrow which sprung from their approaching separation, but he little guessed at all the thoughts which racked the heart of his drooping parent.

The portals were flung open wide, on this day of festivity, and Mrs. Montresor leaned for a moment against the base of the gloomy arch, ere she found breath to speak that painful farewell, which she believed to be the last.

The tall slender figure, which in the dark and frowning entrance looked more like a wandering ghost; the countenance cold, pallid, still enough for death, yet not quite insensible, as if it well retained the memory of earthly woe, formed a striking contrast to the bright and blooming features of Adolphus, whose towering form, full of vigour and grandeur, betrayed the unbroken mind and dauntless spirit within.

"Let me see you within the castle walls, my son, ere I depart;" feebly articulated Mrs. Montresor. "A little rest upon this stone will revive me, and I shall be more easy when I know you safe."

"Safe, my dear mother!" re-echoed Adolphus, smiling through the tears he would not permit to escape from his eyes, "how can I be otherwise than safe every where?" but marking the deep depression of his mother, he feared

to oppose her, and with one hasty embrace, and one earnest entreaty that she would let little Fanny walk home, and take her place on their gentle animal, he sprung up the steep ascent which, worked through the solid rock, led to the Castle of Amesfort, and an abrupt turn in the road withdrew him from that watchful gaze which he preferred to every other.

Adolphus was gone, and Emily closed her eyes—what more had she to see? "Mother," said the eldest girl timidly, "had we not better move?—a little further on is a good seat to rest on, and the air is not *there* so oppressive:" and she glanced around her a look of scorn and defiance, that in her brother's less gentle countenance would have been hatred.

"I did not feel it," said Mrs. Montresor, in that tone of deep tranquil despondency, which had so often struck on the heart of her daughter, but never more deeply than now. She arose, and calmly and steadily retrod the path she had so feebly paced before. She did not once lift her head to survey the scenery: she looked not back when she had gained the

spot at which she had paused, on her road to the castle: her step was slow, but certain; her slender form more erect, though her eyes sought the ground. Her sacrifice was complete; it could not be retracted—nay, she wished it not to be retracted; this trial at least was over, and those that yet might follow, could not be like it.

"He was my pride, my glory," thought the wretched mother; "how could *I* presume to glory in any thing? least of all in those, whose innocent lives I have perhaps steeped in bitterness;" and folding her garment close round her shivering frame, she shrank from the joyous tones of little Fanny, who bounded up to her with childish playfulness, while her elder sister eagerly sought to divert and arrest her attention. The twilight had deepened into shade, but the moon speedily arose, and guided them to their lowly habitation, where to the grief of Miss Montresor, preparations were making for the speedy departure of its present tenants.

CHAPTER II.

ADOLPHUS lingered at the castle door, to shake off the unwonted sadness that stole upon him, on taking leave of his mother. He had often parted from her before, and that to go to foreign lands; but he had never left her looking so ill, so weak, so exhausted. There was something too that oppressed him in this new way of entering the world, under the protection of one, highly spoken of indeed, of ancient family and illustrious descent; but who, although his guardian, appeared more inclined to stretch out the hand of ostentatious protection, than to greet him on a friendly and equal footing.

"If," thought Montresor, "I find nothing but a patron in this haughty Earl of Amesfort, I will return to my mother, or go into the

army;" and with the lofty ideas of independence floating in his mind, he pulled the bell with a force which electrified half-a-dozen idle servants, and brought them in haste to attend the summons. Uncertain daylight yet lingered in the halls; but when Adolphus reached the inner apartments, he found it entirely excluded, and replaced by candelabras, lamps, and vases of transparent alabaster, which latter shed a strong though not dazzling light, while the glare of the others was softened by the old and gloomy hangings on which it fell.

"Would you choose to see my Lord?" asked a solemn-looking butler; "or would you rather dress first?" and he cast a glance of superciliousness at the simple attire of the stranger. The expression was not lost on Adolphus, and he half smiled, as he repeated his wish to see the Earl. His was not the pride prone to take offence, and perpetually exacting what it fears it has no certain right to. He possessed enough to teach him to rely upon his own opinion; and while he granted to others the right he claimed for himself, he saw no reason for subjecting

himself to the influence of any one. Of outward forms, however, he speedily found the domestic knew more than he did; for when he opened the huge folding-doors, and announced the stranger's name, in a voice as deep and loud as if he had thought it of consequence, Adolphus quickly perceived he was the only one of the party whose dress bordered on the peasant's garb.

A magnificent saloon, superbly furnished, was lighted up with uncommon brilliancy, and feathers and diamonds, which young Montresor had simply thought confined to a court, gave additional effect to the whole. The Earl's back was to Adolphus as he entered, but turning, almost before the name reached him, he bowed with more than wonted courtesy, and addressing him with "You do not know the Countess, I believe," led him up to the top of the room, where, half-concealed behind her harp, sat one of the most lovely women that had ever caught the eye of Montresor.

"Lady Amesfort," said the Earl coldly, "give me leave to present my ward and god-

son, Mr. Montresor. Lord De Calmer," he added, slightly touching a young man, who stood beside the Countess. Adolphus bowed, and for a moment waited in respectful silence to be addressed by either of them; but Lady Amesfort having honoured the introduction by a slight inclination of her beautiful head, resumed her conversation with the person next her, and the young man had scarcely by a look deigned to acknowledge it. In this awkward predicament the novice looked round for the Earl as a resource, but he was gone; and the next thing to have recourse to was the music scattered on the piano-forte. He had very diligently turned over the leaves of all that was on a stand open beside him, and, if in the course of the operation he had not acquired much knowledge even of the names of the composers, he had at least shaken off the first feeling of *mauvaise honte* that had ever attacked him.

"Do you play, Mr. Montresor?" said the Countess, striking a few chords. Adolphus replied in the negative, but his eye followed her fingers on the harp as if soliciting what he

ventured not to ask. She complied with the unexpressed wish, and when she had done, exclaimed, "Now I *know* you play, nor will I suffer you to escape me, for I am to be denied nothing to-day!" There was a mingled playfulness and feeling in her manner which Adolphus found irresistible.

"I will accompany you, if you like," said he, taking up a flute that had been flung on a chair; and Lady Amesfort began a short piece on the piano, which Adolphus had often played with his mother.

"Henry," said the Countess, when they had concluded, "you have not sung to-night."

Lord De Calmer started as from a reverie; "I have sung to the child," said he, "until I am hoarse;" and he smiled with a look of ineffable sweetness that struck Montresor, for he had somewhere seen such an expression, and surely, he thought, it must have been on some well-known face, though at the moment he was at a loss to apply it.

"I am afraid," said Lady Amesfort, "I shall not amuse you as much as you delighted

my child, but here's for a trial at least;" and she began an Italian air, to which Adolphus was partial, and in which he could hardly refrain from joining.

"And will not you, too, sing?" she asked, observing the fixedness of his attention.

"Sing here?" said Adolphus in an under tone, looking round on the brilliant assembly with something of scorn on his beautiful features.

"Why not?" replied the Countess; "people who like music will listen, and those who do not will not hear."

"Am I then very fastidious in requiring something more than not being heard? Words may be lost,—it is but the trouble of saying them over again, or the forgetting you ever uttered them,—but sounds require sympathy. Music is either a noise, or a sacred thing, and in such a place as this it can hardly be the latter."

"Was it among the mountains of Switzerland that you acquired this musical enthusiasm?" asked De Calmer; "or is it the spontaneous growth of the soil?"

"What little I possess," replied the stranger, "is probably my own; for there are some things there is no grafting on a man's mind, and I know not any thing it can be worth while to affect;" and his lip curled, while he spoke with an expression of such peculiar haughtiness, that a young man near them, who was upon the point of quizzing travels and romance in the same breath, involuntarily checked himself, and turning to his next neighbour, asked her, "if she could guess the reason of the new comer's appearing in so odd a dress?"

"Is it odd?" said the lady; "I did not observe him, but my daughter says he bows like a foreigner; so it may be the dress of his country."

"Oh indeed it is quite a mistake; he is a ward of Lord Amesfort's; English born, has been educated at Gottingen, and is just come from abroad, somewhere. I heard the Earl telling De Calmer to pay him attention, for some very long reasons I could not listen to, about his talents, &c.; but *he* hates hangers-on, and all things of that sort, so looked rather

sullen at his uncle, and scarce noticed the introduction; however, the flute seems to have done wonders towards breaking the ice. See what music will do in these days!" and young Arundel turned on his heel, in search of some one who would join in his laugh against the cut of Adolphus's coat, inwardly determining the laugh should not be in his hearing.

The supper was long, and, to the new comer, tedious. He was seated among strangers, and so placed as not to see the lovely mistress of the mansion, or even to catch the tones of her voice. But Adolphus had been often in crowds where he had no interest, so that the situation was neither novel nor embarrassing, though far from entertaining. There was apparently little to be gained from listening to the conversation of his neighbours, and he soon withdrew his mind from the splendid board of Lord Amesfort, to fix it on the small parlour which contained his mother and sisters. He longed to revisit it before their departure, but dreaded renewing for her the misery of separation. "I will write to-night," thought he,

" and leave my letter early to-morrow at the cottage she must pass;" and this determination he hastened to put in execution, as soon as he could escape to his room. It was like all the others in the castle, so large and gloomy that the four lights that blazed on the old-fashioned toilet did not throw their rays farther than the centre of the apartment; but Adolphus saw nothing in the room but a table on which he could write to his mother, and establishing himself directly, he began.

" Be under no uneasiness about me, dearest mother. This is a fine place, full of fine people; whether I shall like the one or the other is more than I can tell just yet; and, as to my noble guardian, I don't think I should know him again, if I was to stumble on him in his own house. However, I have one obligation to him—he presented me to his wife, such a little, lovely, sylph-like being, with such moveable features! I believe they express every thing at the same time; at least, I am sure each meaning succeeds its predecessor so rapidly, that a trace of the former one always remains, pro-

ducing the sort of jumble I have sometimes abused in Emily's drawings. I don't abuse it here, though the beautiful little Countess is not the wife I should have thought the proud, cold, severe Earl of Amesfort would have chosen; but, to be sure, she was a girl when he married her, and looks rather like a spoiled child now. Not that I accuse her husband of spoiling her! No—I have yet the tone ringing in my ears, in which my name was pronounced to her, addressing her by her title. There are moments when I hate titles, and this was one of them."

Adolphus had proceeded thus far, when a gentle tap at the door produced the mechanical "Come in!" nor would he have raised his head to observe the intruder, had he not heard the person who entered immediately draw the heavy bolt, which, by the resistance it made, showed how completely its place had hitherto been a sinecure. Montresor looked up, and with wonder perceived the Earl.

"I disturb your writing, Adolphus," said he mildly; "but it will not be for long." Montresor had arisen, and presented a chair to his

patron, who, drawing it out of the influence of the light, made a motion to Adolphus to re-seat himself.

There was a dead pause; by a violent, it would have seemed a painful effort, the Earl began, "Your mother goes to Wales: to-morrow, does she not?"

Adolphus bowed.

"And your sisters also? They are well, I hope?"

"Quite well, I thank you, my Lord; at their age they can have little cause to be otherwise."

"Will not sorrow," said the Earl, in a tone of deep feeling, "canker the youthful bud as easily as it blasts the full-blown flower? Adolphus, if you rely on youth, and health, and spirits only, you will find the shield softer than wax against the shafts of adversity. Time was, when I rested on them—and they have abandoned me."

"I thought of them," said Montresor, in an accent of sympathy, "but as some of the ingredients to happiness; luckily there are others."

"And those," said Lord Amesfort, with a bitter smile, "you think are mine? Well! the outward show, I grant, is fair; and who need dive further? Are you a lover of state and grandeur, Adolphus? Would you choose to be owner of all that confers dignity on me?"

"I love state and grandeur as things to be made use of, as enlarging our sphere of usefulness, and carrying more weight with our counsel. As to your property, my Lord—to the acres you have purchased yesterday you are welcome; give *me* the castle of my fathers, the floors they have trod, the walls they have bled to defend, the memory of heroes who sleep in peace, but whose honoured names should, untarnished by me, be handed down to posterity!"

This burst of enthusiasm for imaginary ancestry, which Montresor had early imbibed in Germany, was checked by a deep groan from the Earl: one hand shaded his face, but with the other he made a motion to cease, and Adolphus in wonder and alarm scarce dared to breathe; at last, he ventured the enquiry,—"was he ill?"

"Ay, young man," said the Earl, as sternly he uncovered his face, "of an illness time cannot cure. But it is not of myself I meant to speak. I am told you dislike the law, to which you have been bred, and aver the propensity for a military life. I dislike it for you: as the sole protector of your mother and sisters, your life should not be cast on the turn of a die; but I have no right to oppose your wishes. You have a commission in the Guards, and I intend sending you to town in a day or two with my nephew Henry de Calmer, a young man you will find worth your knowledge;" and bowing stiffly, Lord Amesfort uttered a cold "good night!" and left Adolphus to conclude his letter.

CHAPTER III.

YOUNG Montresor had left his letter for his mother, walked twenty times to the hill from whence he hoped to see their carriage, resisted the wish to fly after it when it did appear, strolled over the extensive grounds, made several sketches of the most picturesque parts of the old building, and was finally debating within himself whether he should not go to bed again and try to forget his hunger in sleep, when the opening of shutters, and a certain degree of bustle, announced that the servants of the great house were risen. He followed the noise, which conducted him to the breakfast-room, where a drowsy maid was scouring the bright bars, who no sooner perceived him than, struck with horror at any person choosing to

be up at such an hour, she let something fall on the coal-skuttle, which overturning, extinguished her light, and this emitted, as in anger at the attack, a smell rather less fragrant than Adolphus had been enjoying in the flower-garden.

The first impulse is always to fly from mischief of which you have been involuntarily the cause, and our youngster in his eagerness to escape either the wrath of the damsel, or the odour of the extinguished candle, forgot that his object in seeking for some one had been to learn the way to the library, and ashamed of returning, was quietly turning back to his own room, when he met the Earl. "Are you just up?" he asked, and Adolphus assured him with rather comic solemnity, he had been up about four hours.

"And starved, no doubt," said Lord Amesfort. "You may come and breakfast with me, if you will: mine is not a luxurious meal, but a hungry man will take it without requiring apologies."

"At this moment," laughingly replied Adol-

phus, " there are not many things in the shape of food I should quarrel with; and at any time I should conceive what your lordship takes, might be good enough for me."

They entered the Earl's dressing-room, where his own servant brought him, on a small silver salver, one dish of chocolate poured out, and two slices of dry toast. It was set down on a large table covered with maps, pamphlets, tracts, newspapers, and letters, and Adolphus could not help thinking it was a strange whim to be so uncomfortable; however, he very thankfully swallowed what was brought him, and could have wished it to be more, but as this did not occur to the Earl, and the servant made his appearance no more, he prudently sought to persuade himself a moderate meal was wholesome, if it was not pleasant. Lord Amesfort had left his scarce-tasted breakfast, and was busily employed in writing; his visitor took up a book; and their silence had been unbroken, until a gong sounding near them called forth an exclamation from Montresor.

"Did you never hear a gong before?" said the Earl, raising his head with the look of one reproving childishness.

"It is because I have heard it before that it made me start," replied Adolphus. "I was a very little boy when my mother used one as a dinner-bell, and it always gave me so much pleasure when sounded in the open air, where it could reverberate, that I believe it was nearly the first thing I inquired after on my return from Germany. What had become of it no one seemed to know; but whoever has it will at least know my name, for I scratched it thereon in every form my infant erudition allowed of." Montresor got to the end of his speech, though often tempted to stop by the frequent change of Lord Amesfort's countenance. Soon, however, it was composed again, and he said, with great serenity, "If you have so great a regard for the gong, you shall have it as soon as you get a house of your own, for this is the identical one you remember. I know it belonged to your father and mother, but how I came by it I now forget."

" Strange," thought Montresor, " that every body who has any thing to do with this gong should lose their memory ! I wonder whether, if ever I get it, I shall forget who gave it me ?"

They again relapsed into silence, but Lord Amesfort presently rose, and, as he threw up the sash of his gloomy apartment, the child scampered past in full chase of some one, who proved to be Lord De Calmer. The noise of the window opening checked its speed ; but though the boy saw, and by the faint exclamation of " papa," recognised his father, he made no motion to approach him ; nor did the Earl bestow on him any notice on his part. Adolphus had no distempered sensibility, none of that strained and usually acquired feeling which turns every species of affection into misery, and which rather " wakes the nerve where agony is born," than rejoices in the mental sunshine scattered over our path ; yet there were some sorts of coldness he found it difficult not merely to understand, but to pardon. From his cradle he had been his mother's idol, and that there should be parents without natural

affection for their offspring, above all, when young, helpless, and therefore unoffending, he scarcely suffered himself to believe.

"Is this a paltry affectation," thought he, "or is it real hardness of heart? He has feelings—I have witnessed them—not quite callous; but are they all exhausted in selfishness?" The Earl turned round with so sudden a motion that he met the scrutinizing gaze of Montresor riveted upon him. Whatever might be his defects, keenness of perception no one ever had accused him of wanting. He saw at one glance all that was passing over the mind of his young visitor. A faint tinge replaced for a moment on his cheek the colour that youth and health once had painted there: it was not merely the blush of resentment; something of anger was visible, but more of mortification, of inward pain, of regret at being misunderstood, and of pride that allowed of no explanation.

"Adolphus," he said, presently, "if you are not very much interested in your book, you had better adjourn to the breakfast-room. You will find Lady Amesfort down by this

time, and the society there will be rather gayer for you than my room."

"As you choose, my Lord," answered Montresor, rising; "but do I go alone?"

"Without doubt," said the Earl, impatiently: "is it not enough to sacrifice my evenings to people who forget my existence before I am well out of the room?"

"If they forget *you*, my Lord, my chance of being remembered must be so great that I am not in much danger of growing vain."

"You are in no danger of that any where, Adolphus, for you are rather too proud to be vain also. Yet beware, young man; that quality is *not* the safeguard you may take it for. At your age, I felt much like you. I was an only son, heir to my father's wealth and honours: he thought my pride becoming; he encouraged it, miscalled it proper spirit, which would make me shrink from doing aught unworthy myself, unworthy the race from which I sprung. Vain boast! It was not mighty trials, severe temptations that betrayed me, it was my idle confidence in myself. Providence

has showered down blessings upon me, but they bless not me. My own presumption threw me into error: I might have repaired it, but I was too *proud;* and do you know the consequences? I have broken the heart that trusted me; I have severed myself from every dear and sacred tie; I have torn myself from all that lent a charm to life, and I drag on an abhorred existence, an alien in my own house, a stranger in the bosom of my family.... On my greedy ear no voice of sympathy falls; to my aching eye no glance of affection comes, and I have deserved it!"

The Earl bowed his head, overcome with the effort of confessing his wretchedness, still more than by the wretchedness itself. His picture of solitary misery had struck on the heart of his auditor; and in his mother's tone of gentle pleading, he began, but was checked by the Earl.

"There, again!" he cried; "that voice! oh, is that the only voice whose plaintive harmony yet deigns to soothe me?"

The passionate gesture that accompanied

these words, led Adolphus to fear that melancholy had preyed upon the mind of the speaker, until it had materially injured it. He remained silent, until he perceived Lord Amesfort calmer, then gently pressing the hand which hung over the arm of his chair, "Will you suffer me," he said, "to speak to you, not as the obscure individual who owes his future advancement in life to your Lordship's patronage, but as man to man, as a human being deeply feeling the humiliation of our common nature, and keenly sympathising in the miseries it entails upon us?"

A smile of benevolence, almost of affection, was his permission to proceed, but it was mixed too with an expression of sadness, which seemed to say "The root of my malady lies too deep for you."

"I presume not," resumed Montresor, in a tone of strong interest, "to mock the unhappy, (from whatever cause,) by recommending them to strive against the grief that has mastered them; I do not ask of time to perform miracles in their behalf. When we create our own mi-

sery, when it is brought upon us by others, or when no other agency is visible than the immediate hand of Providence, it is still there for every one of us. Our path in life may have roses, but it must have thorns, do what we will to avoid them. The suffering we do not bring upon ourselves, is doubtless the easiest to bear, as it is the rarest: for the other sort, however, there is usually relief. If the consciousness of having wounded any one is dreadful, there is atonement of some kind in general to be made; and for one person we may have injured, there are thousands we may serve. Strong feelings were given us as a means of more effectually benefiting others: they were never intended to be pent up within our own breasts, fixing our thoughts on our own peculiar sorrows, and detaching us from all those who, perhaps, we think, could not bless us, but whom we could bless. If we cannot be happy ourselves, surely it is soothing to make others so; and who has so wide a range of usefulness as the Earl of Amesfort? Your wife is young and lovely; if she loves you not, may it not be because you

do not allow her to do so? Your boy may become any thing you choose to make him, and is not his heart worth gaining? Suffer not the spleen of heartless philosophy to sour you. They are base calumniators of our nature,—which, all fallen as it is, has some glimmering of divinity yet,—who assert that it is difficult to find the way to the hearts of our fellow-creatures. Beings bound by the same ties, endowed with the same perception on all great points, passing onward to the same high destination, have sympathies, and points of union, which there is no shaking off. Doubt it not, my Lord, there are a thousand hearts ready to leap forward and acknowledge you, if you will deign to look for them."

"I will not smile at your enthusiasm, my dear Adolphus," replied the Earl mildly, "but perhaps when you are of my age, you will find there are echoes in the open air, but few in the hearts of our fellow-creatures. I am not a very young man: ill health and broken spirits make me feel older still, and where would be the responsive emotion to all this?—not in the mind

of a young woman full of life, and health, and spirits, who would not understand me even could I explain myself to her. No; sympathy between my wife and me is hopeless: perhaps, though I feel it hard not to be beloved, I should be more wretched still if Lady Amesfort had, twining like a fresh luxuriant flower around a withered trunk, attached herself to one, who would then feel answerable for her happiness, though unable to confer it. I have not blasted the morning of her life: she is happy; and that she is so, is my greatest comfort, since it spares me additional self-reproach. For my boy, he wants not my love: there are plenty to be found to caress him;—poor child! I am more solicitous for his welfare than those whom he now prefers. If he is spared me, I will do my duty to one human being at least. That there should be circumstances connected with him, that give me more pain than I can well conceal, is at once my misfortune and my fault. But enough of this. I have answered you minutely, that you might not suppose I was wilfully deaf to counsel, when given in

kindness and truth. It is not because you are nineteen and I am forty that I scorn to follow your advice, but merely because, like most advice, it is not applicable. Now we will separate in friendliness, I hope," and he took the willing hand of his ward, " but not to revert again to this interdicted subject;" and Adolphus, bowing his respectful obedience to the command, quitted the room immediately, divided between wonder, compassion, and curiosity.

CHAPTER IV.

Two days more Montresor remained at Amesfort Castle, scarcely catching a glimpse of his patron, but noticed sufficiently by Lady Amesfort and Lord De Calmer, to place him upon a pleasant footing with the rest of the society. The latter accompanied him to town; and as they did not sleep in the carriage, they found themselves, on their arrival, much advanced in each other's favour. Even at first sight nothing could appear more different than these two young men. The Peer had been spoiled by every creature that approached him, so that his only fault, a hasty temper, had increased instead of diminishing, and took the form of caprice, imperiousness, illiberality, or unkindness. Early produced in the great world,

it was impossible to have an air of more decided fashion, mingling with a shade of arrogance, and a large proportion of good-nature. His information, which was extensive for his age, led him not so much to pedantry, as to an eager desire to throw ridicule upon those whose pretensions to knowledge did not in his eyes keep pace with their legitimate claim to it. A sort of affected indifference and suavity veiled his satirical qualities; and as he never did an ill-natured thing, or said one in an ill-bred manner, people were content to laugh at his wit, and to flatter themselves with escaping its lash.

Such was Henry De Calmer, as the pupil of high life; but at bottom he was something better, for Nature had been more than commonly bountiful to him, so that his virtues were his own, and his faults those of the school in which he had been educated. Henry was within a few months of being of age, and he looked forward to the time with great impatience; not that the tutelage of his maternal uncle had sat uneasy upon him, or that he expected to be happier any where than he had been at Ames-

fort Castle; but to be his own master, though he never remembered the time when he had been otherwise, was to be felicity unspeakable. "I cannot conceive," he would say to his now constant companion, "that you should have no wish to get out of your teens?"

"I never thought about it," would Adolphus reply; and De Calmer generally concluded all their contests with "You never think about any thing as I do; I can't conceive what can tempt people to say we are alike?"

"Nor I either," thought Montresor, but he never said so, for he had found out it was easy to discompose his new friend. They had not been long in town, when Adolphus heard from his mother: she wrote thus,—

"I thank you, my own Adolphus, for having spared me another parting: your letter did me good; not unmixed good, for there is none such for me; but more than I had any right to expect. Your cheerfulness is my greatest blessing, and I would hardly therefore seek to cast a damp over it; but your comments on your guardian gave me pain. You yourself say he

is unhappy, and it is not like my son to speak lightly of one who suffers. You call him proud, cold, severe—is not this judging harshly of a stranger? When I knew him, he was the most cheerful and indulgent of human beings; and should *you*, Adolphus, condemn pride? You ask me, who is Lord De Calmer? When I saw him last, he was a lovely boy: his mother was the companion of my childhood, the friend of my youth. The father of the present Earl of Amesfort died when quite a young man, leaving two children, his heir Adolphus, and Frances, who made an imprudent marriage with Baron De Calmer.

"The late Lord Amesfort was a domestic man, who did not wish his children to go from under his own eye. About a year or more after his death, his widow married again. She soon lost her husband, but continued to reside at Amesfort Castle. The Dowager-Lady Amesfort was nearly connected with the Montresors: it is unnecessary to enter into all the reasons that induced her to take charge of me, when I was about nine or ten years

old. I lived with her till her death, which took place before I was seventeen. My dear Lady Frances was some years older than I: we led a very retired, I thought then, as well as she did, a very dull life; yet those six years have been by far the best of my existence, and I fear, of Lady Frances's also. She married above a year before her mother's death, and went abroad with her husband; by which means I never saw her after. The little Henry was sent over to England, when a child, partly for education, and partly because the climate of India did not agree with him. Lord and Lady De Calmer returned at last, but it was merely for Frances to die in her native land.

"The present Lord Amesfort took charge of the only child of a sister he had dearly loved: yet I should fear that the young nobleman inherits his father's turn of mind, rather than his mother's, and his uncle has of course consigned him to other hands. So little are people aware of the extent of their duty towards beings, who, as they are well or ill educated, become useful or pernicious members of

society! I speak feelingly on this subject, for had I been educated with any reference to my ultimate advantage, rather than to gratify the whims of my noble protectress, I should perhaps have danced with less grace, played with less execution, sung with less science, and been both a better and a happier woman.

"My letter is of so unconscionable a length, I have hardly room to add, old General Montresor received us, not merely with urbanity, but real kindness. I have not seen his daughter, the fair bride, yet; but the General presented Emily to her, and I hear of nothing from morning to night but Mrs. Dessamere. She is going to London soon, and, I foresee, will ask for Emily to accompany her. I am not one of those parents who long to push forward their girls, while they are young and pretty, in the hope of their marrying well; but Mrs. Dessamere is nearly the only relation Emily has; and, as I cannot live for ever, I would not displease her by a refusal, unless my daughter herself is decidedly averse to the scheme, which, at her age, is what I do not ex-

pect. That God may bless you, my dear Adolphus, ever prays your affectionate mother,

E. MONTRESOR."

"How many times," asked De Calmer, in a tone of impatience, "do you mean to read that letter?"

"Why," returned Adolphus, "if I go on till I understand it, I may read on till Doomsday."

"I will be bound to explain it," cried Lord De Calmer, snatching it out of his hand, "were it full of charades, in less time than you have been twirling it round your fingers, and seeking for the sense in the flowers of the carpet,"—And he ran his eye quickly over it, muttering to himself "So, did not take to my uncle—very good advice; only the first time one sees a person, *is* just the time one judges him, unfortunately for accuracy—'Who is Lord De Calmer?' What the devil, am I coming to my own history?"

"Listeners, you know," said Adolphus, smiling, "hear no good of themselves; take care that you are not in the same predicament."

De Calmer's quick blood rose. "I defy her," he began; but checked himself, and with diminished gaiety continued to read. "'Faith, Montresor, you must be asleep not to see day-light in that epistle—I never read any thing much clearer, and I am heartily glad your sister is not to be cooped up for life among Welsh mountains, with a melancholy mother, and a gouty old man, like poor General Montresor, the stiffest, most ceremonious, most intolerable person, for all he is your cousin, and mine too it would seem, I ever was in company with.—What on earth are you making so long a face at, man?" the lively Henry continued, giving his friend a shake that at least discomposed the muscles of his shoulder, if they had no effect on those of his face.

The parts of Mrs. Montresor's letter that puzzled her son were not such as he felt any disposition to canvass; and he was heartily glad that his gay companion should have passed without comment the neglect he conceived his mother to have met with from Mrs. Dessamere, and the singularity of her omitting to say one

word of Lord Amesfort, during the six years she must have seen so much of him. "Does she know any harm of him?" thought Adolphus. "I remember being told in Germany, 'Your guardian, Lord Amesfort, loved your father more than he did your mother.'"

CHAPTER V.

In the paths of dissipation which Adolphus trod with his new friend, he learned to study mankind in a new light. He saw much to wonder at, much for unbroken spirits to enjoy, something to condemn, and more to laugh at. Well satisfied with his own situation, he still looked forward with uneasiness to the idea of his young sister being initiated into the frivolity and idleness of a town life.

"So you are afraid of the young rustic being spoiled?" said Lord De Calmer, penetrating his unexpressed thoughts.

"Just so," replied Montresor, in the quiet tone of one proof against raillery.

"And you really would rather not see Miss Montresor acquire the polished courtesy of—Lady Amesfort for example?"

"Your example is not fairly taken. I see nothing like Lady Amesfort here; besides, though on no account would I alter *her*, perhaps if she were my sister, I might not always approve the very fascination which now captivates me. Do not however imagine, that I suspect Emily of deviating from her natural manner, or lowering the tone of her character wherever she may be placed. I only fear the quiet life she must hereafter lead, will appear duller by comparison; and what is more mischievous yet, that she may become fastidious in manner; and having learned the charm of polished refinement, will never feel comfortable in other society."

"Poor Montresor!" said De Calmer, in a tone of mock pathos, "thou hast no real sorrow, and so must needs gallop after imaginary ones! Now, I who have no superabundant sensibility, see no necessity for keeping it in play by any such undue means, but slide quietly

through life, without feeling it incumbent upon me to go in search of pain, that does not come in search of me."

"*Quietly!*" repeated Montresor to himself; "and this young man, whose impetuous temper keeps himself and his friends in a never-ceasing fever, talks of sliding through life *quietly!* How little do we know ourselves!"

That evening, the two young men were to go to the Opera: Henry had letters of business to write, a task he was always ready to put off; and he was particularly provoked with them on that day, as he liked the party he was to join. Adolphus enjoyed the harmony of sounds, but the harmony of a satisfied countenance more still; and he readily offered to stay at home and write the letters for his friend. De Calmer's was a temper hostile to obligations in general: to have received them from those he did not both love and respect, would have galled him too deeply, however trifling they might be; but he was rather glad of an opportunity of being obliged by Adolphus, for he was aware that his uncle's ward, however independent in mind, was

not so in fortune; and he knew there was no possible way of serving him in future, but on the plea of mutual benefits.

The young men had taken lodgings together, and Montresor having written and sent the letters in question, was so deeply engrossed by a mathematical calculation, that he was not aware of the hour, when Henry returned from the Opera, and an assembly to which he had gone afterwards. He entered the room with his usual gaiety, exclaiming:

"Now let us thank the gods, Adolphus! who prevented our going out together to-night, for there can be no doubt but we should have been fighting at this moment."

"Indeed!" said Adolphus, looking up from his tranquil occupation with an incredulous smile.

"Ay, you may look wise, and shake your head; but the fact is more certain, than that those horrible lines you are poring over, will ever be understood by mortal man, or by ghosts,—any less a one than Euclid himself."

"I perceive, I must make them over to Eu-

clid for the present," said Adolphus, smiling, as he closed his book, and gathered up his papers: "and now, pray what were we to have fought about, if our kind stars had not interposed?"

"For one of the fairest daughters of Eve, that ever tempted unhappy man with forbidden fruit."

"Quarrel for a woman!" said Montresor, lighting his candle; "that *would* be worth while! Good night, my dear Henry: as you are a modern lover, you will not think it an insult to have the wish of repose bestowed upon you!"

"At least, I swear *you* shall have no repose until you hear my story out; so don't be a churl, blow out your candle, sit down and listen. I was earlier than I need have been, so found my party were not arrived. The box to my right was occupied; but the curtain drawn so close, there was no discovering by whom. It was evident from their conversation that the two ladies, at least, had never seen an Opera before; so, out of idleness and curiosity, I lis-

tened to their remarks, which were spirited and amusing enough. I caught a glimpse of the lady who talked and laughed most: she was young, and had the beauty I hate, of deep vivid colour: she leant very *much* forward, and was eager to make her companion do so too; but the constant reply of, 'I see perfectly,' at last disheartened her, and provoked me, for it was of course just the person I could not see that I was curious about. I crossed the house to the other side, but gained only a fuller prospect of the lady I had seen before, who concealed the other effectually; so finding I only lost the sweet tones of my neighbour, without gaining a view of her face, I returned to my party.

"Lady Delavel took my arm as we were coming out, so I could not watch the strangers as I had intended; but the crowd was so great, that we were torn asunder. At this moment, I saw the other party in rather a deplorable situation. Unaccustomed to the place, they had neglected to keep to the wall, and were fairly borne down the current in the centre. I made

my way to the door, just as the lady on whom I had kept my eye was separated from her companion, who was thrown with some force against me. Such a creature you never saw then, Montresor, nor shall I see such another to my dying day! She was pale with terror, but perfectly silent: in the jostle, her hair had fallen down, and hung in rich clusters over her shoulders. I endeavoured to re-assure her, with the promise of soon joining her friends. She was so much overcome, I thought she would have fainted, but the fresh air restored her. We had been bearing our fate, with great patience on her part, and great satisfaction on mine, for nearly a quarter of an hour, when her friend's husband joined us, and said he had sent his wife home, so that my companion must content herself with a hackney-coach."

"Any thing to get away from hence," she said; then, blushing as if fearful of appearing rude to me, she accompanied her farewell with a look that would have redeemed any thing. I offered my carriage, which the gentleman seemed disposed to accept; but the lady

was decidedly adverse, and gained the day. I went to Mrs. Arundel's rout, and met my people again, but their names I have not to this moment made out, nor could I, without an introduction, continue to converse with the fair object of my admiration."

"So then," said Montresor, "you may never chance to light again upon this beautiful unknown."

"Not see her again, after meeting her twice running! Nonsense, man!—if she is above ground, I see her to-morrow."

"You will sleep off this fancy, De Calmer, for you are not subject to them, I think."

"For that very reason, I shall not sleep it off. I tell you, Adolphus, all your philosophy is nothing to me. Since I must be in love, I will be so in earnest, nor will I ever give you any peace until you oblige me by being just as absurd yourself."

"Well, do but let me go to bed now, and I promise to dream of your incognita, and fall in love from description."

"Not with her! you are the only man on earth I could not bear for my rival."

"Bravo, De Calmer! I am to pass over the vanity of that speech, out of gratitude to the compliment to me, am I?"—and the young men laughingly separated.

The next morning they were sitting over their late breakfast, forming conjectures respecting the fair unknown, when the servant, addressing Montresor, informed him, two ladies, who would not give their names, begged to be admitted.

"Two, you unconscionable dog!" exclaimed the young Peer.

"Be content, Henry; I make one over to you."

"I take you at your word;"—and the door flung open; two ladies entered; the youngest was quickly pressed to the heart of Adolphus.

"My dear Emily, this is sooner than I thought to see you. You had a mind to catch me at some mischief, it seems."

"Just as I thought," cried the other lady;

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" I am reduced to introducing myself.—Emily, I desire you will suffer your brother to make his bow to his cousin, when she does him the honour of visiting him."

" I am quite ashamed.—Adolphus,—Mrs. Dessamere. We could not well see you before, for it was late yesterday when we arrived, and I was taken to sights immediately."

" Now, you shall not tell that story," cried Mrs. Dessamere. — " You must know, Mr. Montresor, your sister is a prude, and has less faith in her looking-glass than is proper. She made a conquest in the crowd at the opera last night;—not a favourable place, I acknowledge; but still I maintain the fact, let her say what she will."

" And I," cried Emily playfully, " deny it, were it only for the credit of humanity. It is too hard upon a man to suppose he cannot be civil without being in love."

" But," said Adolphus, smiling archly, " it is pleasant to know civil people; so, permit me to introduce Lord De Calmer to you," and he drew forward the young Peer, who had not

stirred from the moment of Miss Montresor's entrance, and who now bowed with more embarrassment, if possible, than she felt. Adolphus could not help enjoying their confusion; but, appearing not to notice it, he devoted his attention to Mrs. Dessamere. Neither Emily nor Lord De Calmer took any advantage of this wilful blindness. She sat trying to think of something that would be proper to say, until the silence had lasted so long she was ashamed of breaking it; and he stood near her, thinking of nothing, and affecting to look at Mrs. Dessamere, while, in fact, he watched every nervous motion of Emily's long eyelashes. Miss Montresor was not, on most occasions, destitute of that presence of mind which formed so striking a feature in her brother's character. In a few minutes she recovered her accustomed composure, and, determining to shorten this unpleasant visit, she reminded her cousin of their promise to meet Colonel Dessamere.

"What a fidget you are, child! You were dying to see your brother, and now you are dying to leave him."

"And you will not suffer me to die, I am sure," replied Emily, rising.

"Well, take your own way, and make Mr. Montresor dine with us to-day or to-morrow;" and, looking towards Lord De Calmer, she was going to include him, but was stopped by an imploring look from Emily. The young Peer understood it all at one glance: he was near the door, and offered his arm to Mrs. Dessamere. Miss Montresor stopped for a moment, to know when she should see her brother again; then, flying down-stairs, sprung into the carriage, without appearing to notice the proffered hand of De Calmer.

"What an admirable game of cross purposes you and your fair unknown have been playing just now," said Adolphus, as Henry rather sulkily returned to the room. "Why you chose to torment each other in that way, I, who am ignorant in Cupid's concerns, was not very well able to make out."

"Torment one another! What nonsense, Montresor! She may find it no easy matter to

torment me; and, it is pretty clear, I cannot torment her."

"So, then, you tried: well, there's an honest confession at least," seriously continued Adolphus, changing the tone of his voice. "I rejoice, for your sake, that the unknown, who was so near turning your head, proves to be my sister, as the discovery will restore you to the senses you were on the verge of abandoning last night. You will find many women fit to be the object of a violent and transient fancy, and who may even be flattered by it; but Emily Montresor is not the person you are seeking."

"What the devil is the matter with the fellow!" thought De Calmer, as his eye followed the commanding figure of Adolphus moving across the room with increased stateliness.

"Come," he cried aloud, "don't be mustering up all your pride when there is no enemy to meet; it's a waste of ammunition, you know. I have not parted so entirely with my senses, as not to know one friend is worth two

mistresses; so, here's my hand, Adolphus, and I will swear, if you like it, that the radiant Emily is not fair, only I should be afraid of some evil genii popping upon me, if I ventured to tell such a barefaced lie."

"I ask no oaths or vows," said Adolphus, affectingly pressing his hand; and De Calmer felt more bound by his friend's look of generous confidence, than if he had made protestations innumerable.

CHAPTER VI.

MRS. DESSAMERE was a young and lively woman, too well pleased with herself not to be generally pleased with others. The only surviving child of General Montresor, she was thought to be a good match, and was recommended as such to the Honourable Colonel Dessamere by his particular friend. Dessamere certainly did not want a wife, but then he did want money, and reluctantly he accompanied his friend to visit the old General. The stiff politeness and formal attention with which he was received, almost put to flight any idea of entering such a family; but Augusta Montresor appeared, and his ideas took another turn. A romantic person would not perhaps have called a man in love, from whose mind pounds,

shillings, and pence were never one instant absent; but Dessamere, it is presumed, was not romantic, for he did think himself in love; and as he found Augusta very ready to think so too, they were not long in consulting General Montresor on the subject. The old officer had a prejudice in favour of his profession, and another in favour of family—both were gratified by his daughter's choice: and though he had seen many men he preferred to Dessamere, and thought him too old for Augusta, and too gay for any sober woman, he wisely considered that was her affair, and gave his consent; and, what his son-in-law thought more to the purpose, a very handsome fortune; expressly stating, they were not to rely upon any thing more after his death. But wills are things nobody can be reasonable about: few people know how to make them, and fewer learn to expect nothing from them.

Dessamere threw his money to the right and the left, nor could he reasonably check his wife's extravagance, since it was to her father he looked ultimately in case of embarrassments.

The bride was eager to come to town; but, as she knew hardly any one there, she did not wish to come alone. Her cousin Emily fell in her way, at the very moment she was considering to which of her acquaintance she should propose accompanying her. Some had ill health, and could not bear raking; some had precise mothers, who would not suffer their girls to move without them; some were vulgar, and some were ill-tempered;—finally, some were too handsome; and Mrs. Dessamere, though a good-natured person, and very ready to admire her friends, naturally enough stipulated to be the most admired herself. Now, Emily's beauty was so unlike her cousin's, that Mrs. Dessamere, in the simplicity of her heart, could not discover that she was pretty at all, and would have described her as a nice pleasant creature, fair and elegant, without any effect; and as effect was just what Augusta had been most admired for, she of course thought it an indispensable part of beauty. Dessamere, who had been living in dread of his wife domesticating and carrying about some good sort of country neigh-

bour, was not a little relieved at her having fixed upon Emily, and was well content to reply to the numerous enquiries of "Who is that lovely creature?" "A relation of my wife's —the same name."

"The Montresor family," said a gentleman one night to Lord De Calmer, "unite every style of beauty. How came they to be hid so long? For Mrs. Dessamere and her cousin have come upon us like a sudden burst of light, nor can any one divine from whence."

"Mr. Montresor can explain that better than I," said Lord De Calmer, presenting his friend.

"My sister," said Adolphus, smiling, "is only on a visit to Mr. Dessamere, and will probably see London no more. I can no otherwise account for General Montresor's daughter being unknown, than from her having been abroad, where her mother went for the recovery of her health. She died in Italy, and General Montresor has not returned to England much above a twelvemonth."

Some one addressing Adolphus, he moved away to join him; and the gentleman to whom

he had been speaking, turned again to Lord De Calmer: "And so that's a Montresor too! what a noble-looking creature! Who is he? for there must be good blood in that fellow's veins."

"I know nothing of his family: his father, I understand, is dead, and was related, or connected, or both, with my uncle Amesfort, who is guardian to this young man."

"So! a soldier of fortune quite."

"Very possibly. I know nothing for certain, but that the good fortune of knowing him is undeniable."

"Would you believe it," said the gentleman to Mr. Arundel, "De Calmer is grown *un heros d'amitié?* He almost resented my asking a few idle questions about his uncle's ward."

"What, Montresor!" cried Arundel; "I was at Amesfort Castle the other day, when he made his *debût*. He turned all their heads, I think; but, as to getting a plain answer to the simple question, Who is he? take my word for it, you will lose your labour, as I did mine. De Calmer was determined not to like the inter-

loper at first, just because his uncle desired him to like him, I suppose; but Montresor had Harlequin's wand, with which he could change every thing at will, for they were fast friends directly; and I should not wonder if he got him to marry his sister, though De Calmer is not easily taken in."

"Taken in?" retorted the other; "it would be no great misfortune to have such a lovely wife, either. She would grace a higher title and an older one than that paltry new-made thing."

Miss Montresor, who had with great patience endured this conversation passing at her ear, began to think she had heard enough, and begged Mrs. Dessamere to move a little. Though she spoke in a low tone, she was heard by those who had unwittingly been tormenting her; and, turning round, they added to her discomfort by a stare, which was habitual to them; but being new to Emily, she coloured beneath the imaginary insult, and more earnestly begged her cousin to move. But she was deep in an

interesting flirtation, and contented herself with replying "Presently, my dear."

Miss Montresor had nothing for it but resignation; but as her countenance was not a very happy one at that moment, it struck Lord De Calmer, who immediately forgot he had determined not to speak to her that evening, and coming up, he asked her if she felt ill? Emily, whose ears were now on the *qui vive*, heard the smothered laugh of Arundel and his companion, and wished Lord De Calmer in India, or herself in Wales.

"Quite well in health," she replied thoughtlessly, so much was she in the habit of telling the exact truth.

"Not ill otherwise, I trust," said Lord De Calmer anxiously; "you have had no bad accounts of Mrs. Montresor?"

"Excellent young man!" thought Emily, forgetting, in his affecting tone of interest, the frivolous beings whose discourse had annoyed her; "he thinks nothing but my mother's illness ought to give me pain."

"No, thank God!" she added aloud, "I have no real cause of uneasiness whatever. I was merely out of temper."

"And do you recover best alone, or in company?"

"Best alone, I think; for it would be bad policy to be out of temper with oneself, and there is no being angry with others when you don't see them."

"Then, you always forget others, when you don't see them?"

"That depends," said Emily, laughing, "on whether they are worth remembering or not."

"Do you find many people worth remembering?"

"Do *you*, my Lord?"

"Oh no, indeed!"

"Then, how should I, who have lived only with my mother, Adolphus, and little Fanny, except ten days spent in a crowd, where I have not met a soul who will remember my existence next season."

"You pour out the waters of Lethe with an unsparing hand," said De Calmer in a tone

of reproach; and fearing to say too much, he addressed Mrs. Dessamere. That lady, in compliance with her cousin's wishes, had forborne to show any particular encouragement to the young Peer; but, at this moment, Emily and her feelings were put out of her head by a more important subject,—a waltzing ball. How to get to this ball was the object; and Lord De Calmer, she thought, could assist her. She began by asking, Was he to be there? talked of the superior style of waltzing abroad, where she had often seen it; and regretted her being unacquainted with the person who was to give this ball.

"If you wish to go," said De Calmer, "you shall have an invitation to-morrow;" and he retreated immediately from the delighted thanks of the lady. The invitation came while they were at breakfast the next day; and Mrs. Dessamere poured forth as warm eulogiums on De Calmer, as if he had conferred an everlasting benefit on his country in general. Dessamere caught the smile wandering over Emily's features at the manner in which his wife worded

her praise, and could not help remarking that it was very appropriate. It is never very pleasant to be laughed at, least of all by one's husband; and Mrs. Dessamere, not venturing to resent it in the right place, vented her discontent on poor Emily.

Miss Montresor was of a more than commonly grateful temper. She had been gratified by her cousin's kindness, and enchanted with her lively disposition; she was proportionably hurt at the change in her manner, and was, above all, in continual dread of Dessamere making some comment upon it, that would of course make matters worse. A little prudence, and a great deal of good temper, smooths many a rugged path; and as Emily was supereminently endowed with both these rare qualities, the cloud soon passed over, though not without damping considerably the spirits with which the young rustic had entered her new career of gaiety. She had indeed soon discovered, how little unmixed good is to be found any where. The life she led had the charm of novelty to recommend it, and there was an excitement to

one so long used to retirement, even in the country dance played on the organ in the street. As to Punch, she was ashamed to confess how much it diverted her; and though she had not Mrs. Dessamere's pleasure in shopping, or any notion of the temptation to purchase what she did not want—even there, her ignorance was a source of amusement. The indecision of the ladies, the airs of the gentlemen, the obsequious civility of the shopkeepers, their routine of phrases, and their particular wish to oblige the identical person who was speaking to them, in preference to all others whomsoever, had more than once excited her laughter.

At the milliner's she grew most tired; for, though she had no objection to Mrs. Dessamere trying on every cap in the shop, and receiving a fresh compliment at each, she was a little impatient at her cousin putting them on her, to judge of their effect, as she said. Not that she would not have made a very passive block at her own house, safe from the comments of the milliner's apprentices; but she had something of her brother's pride, which, teaching her

to shrink from gross flattery as an impertinence almost amounting to insult, rendered her more than commonly susceptible of its influence, when veiled by delicacy and taste. Emily often wondered at the good temper with which her cousin received a general compliment; and tried to be equally courteous; but it was forcing her nature, which rebelled against it: no wonder, then, that she could not, or would not see that Mrs. Dessamere was really gratified and flattered by the very speeches from which she recoiled.

CHAPTER VII.

THE waltzing ball at last took place, not without producing cabals, disappointments, and sarcasms innumerable. It was not easy to get to it, for the noble giver had determined that none but waltzing ladies should be there. Every one wanted to be invited, but every one did not venture to say so. So much nonsense had been talked on both sides, respecting this foreign dance, that no one found the path back to common sense easy to discover. The body of oppositionists, in this important matter, was not so formidable as might have been supposed by the first view of their numbers. Some were deserters from the other party, having been seized with a panic, that their daughters, failing to secure as a partner for life any of the

advocates for waltzing, would have no chance with quieter people, who stuck to old customs with as much pertinacity as they would have done to old virtues. Others objected to it, because people they disliked patronised it;—and finally, under the banners of the more determined and staunch supporters of the decorum of our ancestors, were enlisted many who only sought for a fair opportunity of seceding with a show of propriety, and languished to exhibit either their own graceful forms, or those of their girls, in the only chance in which grace is at once indispensable and fascinating.

From the mere rumour of such divisions in the land of fashion, Miss Montresor had been far removed. She saw, indeed, much anxiety prevail upon the subject; but, since her visit to town, she had so invariably thought both the pain and the pleasure expressed so utterly disproportionate to the causes which gave them birth, that there was nothing now to wonder at; and she therefore simply took it for granted, that a waltzing ball must be pleasanter than any other, since it produced so much more *sensation*.

She went, and found the apartments more than usually handsome, the music excellent;—and, whether from the size of the rooms, or the comparatively small number of dancers, neither heat, nor bustle, nor crowd, which Emily, like a true lover of dancing, was rejoiced to see. Mr. Dessamere lost no time in joining those who were actively employed; whilst her cousin, either less known, or less observed, took her brother's arm, and her station near a large window in a recess which was filled with the most beautiful flowers. She was in a few minutes joined by Mr. Arundel, who begged she would decide whether he had won or lost his wager.

"What," asked the surprised Emily, "can I know about your wagers?"

"No one can know so well as yourself; it is whether you are a waltzer? Now, I betted confidently you were not; for, I know, De Calmer abhors it; and, as he is so great a friend of your brother's, I took it for granted, Mr. Montresor would be of the same opinion."

Emily, from whose mind the observations

made by this gentleman some time before were by no means obliterated, coloured with indignation, and her first impulse was to show her indifference to Lord De Calmer's opinion, and avow her predilection for the dance; but the next feeling was more like herself. "Shall such an animal as that move me?" thought she; and quietly she replied, "I am very ready to bow to Lord De Calmer in matters of taste; and, if he objects to it, I have no doubt it is objectionable."

"Then," said Arundel, in a tone of spiteful triumph, "you will not waltz to-night?"

"You think, then," said Emily slily, "it would be impossible to get leave from Lord De Calmer."

"I will ask him, if you like," quickly retorted her tormentor; who, aware she was quizzing him, determined to be revenged.

"That," said she calmly, "is giving you a great deal of trouble;" but Arundel, fearful of a prohibition, had flown in search of the young Peer.

"Why, my dear Emily," said Montresor

rather impatiently, "why would you let that idle fellow run away with the idea that you regulated your opinions and actions on Lord De Calmer's or Lord Anybody's?"

"Because, Adolphus, the idea is already fixed in his capacious intellect: denying it, would not only have done me no good, but would have left the field open to as many more attacks of the same nature as could have been veiled in the semblance of good-breeding; the reality, which we have been taught to think consists in the fear of wounding the feelings of another, is many tones higher than characters of Mr. Arundel's cast. Now, as I don't exactly know how I should get out of the scrape in case he does send Lord De Calmer, I wish very much you would waltz with me, if it was ever so short a time."

"That would do you no good, my dear; for waltzing with a brother has always been allowable."

"I will look for Colonel Dessamere, then."

"Nay," said a voice behind them, "beware of a second refusal!"—It was Lord De Calmer:

and Emily felt quite as uncomfortable as Mr. Arundel could have wished.

"Pray," said he, quietly drawing her hand through his arm, "set poor Arundel's mind at ease by convincing him you have my permission to waltz.—Here, Adolphus," he added, twirling Emily's scarf round him, "don't lose the shawl, if you don't mean to be well-scolded to-morrow:" and before Emily could reply, or scarcely know where she was, she found herself engaged in the never-ending maze, and, between the music and her partner, performing her part as well as if she was thinking of nothing else. This, however, was far from being the case: she was confounded, nor did she venture to look up, dreading every where to meet the malignant laugh of Arundel. She had not waltzed for so long, that a slight sensation of giddiness added to her confused ideas. She did not like to stop, for then she must speak, which she felt would be difficult: she dreaded going on, lest, being still more uncomfortable, she should lose the power of moving; and the nervous terror of a fainting, or any sort of scene

with Lord De Calmer, made her tremble universally. Luckily for her, she found her partner stop. It was very near a couch, and, having seated her, he said quietly, "Don't speak yet, for I see you are giddy."

Emily hardly felt less grateful to him, than she had done the first night of her seeing him in the crowd at the Opera. Adolphus joined them immediately; "I release you from all duty," said he, trying to smile, as he seated himself beside his sister.

"I thank you," said De Calmer drily, "but I have not released myself yet. Do you mean to dance any more, Miss Montresor."

"Yes," she answered hastily, "when my head has got into its right place again."

"What, without my leave?"

"I imagine, even if I took the trouble to ask it, you would hardly take the trouble of answering so very uninteresting a question."

"Certainly, I can claim no right to advise you upon any subject, whether interesting or otherwise; but you are so very young, and so new to this sort of life, that I thought the opi-

nion of your brother's friend might not be without some weight. If I was wrong, I can but regret it; I have neither the right nor the wish to complain."

"Emily's heart smote her for having seemed to repulse such disinterested kindness, and her eloquent eyes explained her feelings better than her disjointed phrase.

"Are you aware," he began, "that many people condemn this practice?"

"No, indeed!—upon what possible plea?"

"I shall make you stare, I perceive:—on the plea of its impropriety."

"Is it possible?" cried Emily, colouring; "and why," she added, casting a half-reproachful look at her brother, "not have informed me of this?"

"Because," quietly replied Montresor, "I have read the fable of 'The Old Man, his Son, and the Ass.' In other words, there is no pleasing every body; so, why not please one's self on matters too of so little consequence?"

"Things are of consequence according as they are considered," interrupted De Calmer. "A dance is of no consequence to us, no doubt,

any more than a dress is to Miss Montresor; yet we know there are people who think seriously about both, and to whom they are important matters."

"And so we are to have our judgments constantly biassed by people we ourselves feel to be our inferiors?"

"Not *ours*, Adolphus! We are called upon to be consistent, and can be so only by acting up to our own sentiments, unwarped by the comments of others. But is a woman—a young and lovely woman, like your sister—in the same predicament? If I know any thing of Miss Montresor, she is the last person who would willingly make herself conspicuous, or risk censure, however undeserved; least of all, that sort of censure," and his keen eye scanned the troubled features of Emily, anxious to gather from them her determination.

"I wish," she said at last, "you had told me all this before we danced."

"Why so?"

"Because now I must dance this night with any body that will ask me; and with the calumnies against this innocent dance you have put

into my head, I shall feel very awkward and uncomfortable."

"And why must you dance? Can you not be tired, or dance with Adolphus?"

"And let my amiable friend Mr. Arundel say, with some reason, Miss Montresor thinks it incorrect to waltz with any one but Lord De Calmer! No, no, my Lord, it would be better to spend my life in waltzing;" and proudly she curved her beautiful throat with one of her brother's well-known looks.—Lord De Calmer remained silent, but a half-stifled sigh reached the ear of his companion, and made her repent the pointed manner in which she had shown her determination to grant him no sort of preference. Montresor, who dreaded this conversation taking a more tender turn, arose, and asked his sister if she had not better see whether Mrs. Dessamere had left the dance.

De Calmer had hoped that remaining in the anteroom she would be unobserved, and escape dancing; but he had temper enough to do his friend justice, and could see that no waltzing could do Emily so much harm as talking all night to him.

Miss Montresor danced both before supper and after, but the pleasure of her evening was destroyed. In vain she met every where the friendly eye of De Calmer, and saw his encouraging smile; she was doing what he condemned, and her spirit and elasticity were gone.

"What a delicate creature your sister is!" said Mrs. Dessamere to Adolphus, who was at that moment her partner.

"She was quite weary after the first dance, in which she certainly acquitted herself better than any one in the room; but now, do but see how languidly she moves!"

"There is a great deal in having a good partner," said the persevering Arundel.

"Sir Master Percy dances very well," answered Mrs. Dessamere, who had the very useful quality of seeing, in words, only their most obvious and good-natured meaning. Montresor grew impatient; and when he had seated Mrs. Dessamere, he went in search of his sister.

"Emily, you are asleep. Come, child, do forget De Calmer for a moment and dance like yourself."

This time Miss Montresor did not merely

blush; the tears also started into her eyes. "Adolphus, is this kind?" she replied in an under-tone. "What your friend told me would have occupied me as much, had it been mentioned by any other person."

"Of course," said Montresor hastily, vexed at her uneasiness; "I meant his comments, not himself. You must dance with *me* now, and pray exert yourself." It was a waltz Emily and her brother had often danced while their mother played to them; and transported by the air to other times, and a beloved home, Miss Montresor's manner and countenance changed with the altered feelings. Murmurs of applause ran round the room, and De Calmer too was ready to admire.

"You are quite rallied, my love," said her cousin, "it is almost a pity to leave off."

"There," said Colonel Dessamere, "I differ from you; for the moment to leave off any thing is in the height of success."

"Which means," said Emily, laughing, "that you are sleepy. Though I am not, I am quite ready to go home;" and she took his

proffered arm, almost wondering that De Calmer should not have offered his. They passed very near him, but he only bowed, and that rather stiffly.

"How strange!" thought Emily: "and yet I am sure I don't know why he should be thinking of me: he must have many other things and people to occupy him," and unconsciously she closed her reflections with a sigh. She forgot, however, both them, and the seeming neglect which gave birth to them, the next time she met Lord De Calmer.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE two young men were to dine next day with Colonel Dessamere. Emily appeared but for a moment, not willing to leave her cousin, who had fatigued herself too much the night before, and being in a situation that called for quiet, was now suffering for her imprudence. She bore her retreat so impatiently, that it was of course obliged to be prolonged, and she became seriously ill. Col. Dessamere was much alarmed at first, and never quitted her; but when she was out of danger, his attention relaxed with his anxiety, and Emily became the sole companion of a languid and restless invalid. The confinement was tedious; and Miss Montresor rejoiced nearly as much for her own

sake as for her cousin's, when Mrs. Dessamere was wheeled into the drawing-room, and suffered to see a few particular friends. Adolphus was, of course, of the favoured number, and somehow or other Lord De Calmer contrived also to make one. His sprightly sallies, his happy manner of describing, and his numerous acquaintance, from whom there was always news of some sort or other to be gleaned, contributed considerably more to the amusement of the invalid, than the sober converse of Adolphus. "Your brother," she would sometimes say to Emily, "is like some beautiful rock proudly displaying its picturesque outline to the ceaseless waves of the ocean, and veiling its awful summit in the grey mists of Heaven, for ever wearing the same indefinite colour of repose and immutability. But De Calmer is like an Italian sky, rich in glowing colours and exhilarating beauty. There is more magnificence and lonely grandeur in my cousin; but more excitement, more consciousness of existence about his friend; and while

the eye of one speaks of the majesty of Heaven, that of the other is bent on the happiness of man."

Adolphus was probably less amusing to Mrs. Dessamere than he would have been to any one more inclined to sympathise with his peculiar feelings. Aware of the difference of their dispositions, Miss Montresor only wondered that Mrs. Dessamere should have the good taste to admire what she had not the power to sympathise with, and was quite ready to do full justice to Lord De Calmer, not only as an agreeable companion, but as an excellent man. The kindness with which he gave so much of his time to a sick room was over-rated by her, who saw in it no other attraction than the exercise of kindly and benevolent feelings—feelings which, she saw with regret and wonder, were so little apt to sway the husband of Augusta.

There were moments when Emily dreaded for her cousin the kindness of strangers as too painful a contrast to the inattention of Dessamere; but with more humanity and judgment

than is usually exercised on such occasions, she carefully concealed such sentiments, and strove to exaggerate any ordinary act of good nature on Dessamere's part, and lend to his careless enquiry after his wife, as he quitted the house, the tone of interest and kindness. Montresor marked and severely censured the conduct which Emily was so often called upon to palliate, but his remarks were confined to the ear of his friend or his sister. De Calmer laughed. "Why, Adolphus, you are rather hard on a poor husband; while his wife is amused, it is fair enough he should amuse himself too. Augusta Montresor chose a man of fashion, not a domestic country gentleman; and she did not, I suppose, mean to unite all advantages. How grave you look, Miss Montresor!"

"Have I not cause?" said Emily, reproachfully. "When I hear attachment made only *one* of the advantages of marriage, I confess I look round in vain for what the others may be."

"But who," impatiently retorted De Calmer, "was placing you in such a situation?

other motives will determine your choice, and other results will of course ensue. It would be utterly impossible for you to be a neglected wife."

"And what is my security, my Lord? What advantages have I that my cousin does not possess to perfection?"

"Shall I tell you?" said De Calmer affectionately. "You have a heart which calls imperiously for another heart; which deserves another. He would, indeed, be less than man, who, rich in such a treasure, could neglect it;" and the sigh which closed his remark, added to the confusion with which Emily's eye had sunk beneath the expression of his. Eager to withdraw herself and her own feelings from the conversation, she quickly replied, "You do my cousin injustice, if you imagine she married Colonel Dessamere without a decided preference. Young, handsome, admired, of a good family, and heir to her father's large property, she could have no object in marrying but regard for him, particularly as he was known to have slender means, and nothing brilliant in the way

of prospects, to say nothing of his being more than ten years older than Augusta."

"Which," said Adolphus, smiling, "you think a great objection?"

"Don't laugh at me, brother! I do not mean to call Colonel Dessamere an old man, (though even you must allow he does not *look* young,) but surely it is natural to expect more congeniality of temper, pursuits, and sentiments, in people of our own age, than in those who are weary of what we are eager to enjoy, and have learned to doubt every thing it can give one pleasure to believe. I do not think," she added fervently, "it is possible to love any human being more than I love our dear mother; yet I cannot express how my spirits sink before one of her mild mournful speeches, beginning, 'When you have lived as long as I have, Emily, you will cease to attach consequence to these things,' or, 'At your age, my child, I too could dream.' I declare I feel now the mortal chill she has so often given me; and yet she is quite young."

"In years she is young," said Montresor

sadly; "but she has found time to shed more tears than are sometimes wasted in a long life. Even in our infancy, her smiles were more like a winter's sun, cheering without warming; and since my return home this last time they are less and less frequent."

Miss Montresor, who had so seldom left her mother, was not quite so much in the dark respecting the possible causes of her mother's dejection as Adolphus, but it was a subject which she always most carefully avoided, and vexed at having fallen upon it unconsciously, she remained silent and uncomfortable, until Mrs. Dessamere's bell ringing announced her being dressed, and ready to admit company.

The season was now far advanced, and the heat of the town being unfavourable to Mrs. Dessamere's weak state, who had lost all hope of partaking in any farther gaieties this year, she consented to be removed a few miles into the country. Lady Georgiana Fairfax, a sister of Colonel Dessamere's, a most pleasing and courteous person, offered to take charge of Emily, and Augusta was generous enough to

recommend her cousin to accept the invitation. Emily liked Lady Georgiana, would have been glad of a little more amusement, and could not think of quitting her brother and his friend without a sigh; but she had been brought up to consider the shadow of a duty as outweighing every personal gratification, and without hesitation she declined the tempting offer.

"I see," said Lady Georgiana, "what your motive is, though you are too unostentatious to assign it; but, my dear Miss Montresor, consider my sister is well enough to see company now, and therefore does not require a continuance of your assiduous cares. Besides, suffer me to speak to you as a friend solicitous for your welfare—as your mother would speak did she see how you are now situated. By leaving town just at present, you are in all probability depriving yourself of an excellent establishment. Lord De Calmer remains here: I am aware he will see nothing half so lovely as you, but we all know men; '*lorsqu'on n'a pas ce qu'on aime, il faut aimer ce qu'on a*,' is a pretty general maxim with them; and it would be a pity, you

know, to lose such a fine young man as that, for whom all mammas are angling, and all misses are dying, merely out of a fit of sentiment for Augusta."

There were many things that made this speech difficult to bear: luckily for Miss Montresor it awoke her pride more than any other sentiment. What! *she* remain any where one moment with the avowed object of retaining the affections of a man who waited only her absence to send them wandering after some one else! *She* wait to be wooed, and acknowledge a matrimonial design on any mortal breathing! Let the reader fancy himself a rustic girl of nineteen, educated far from cabals and intrigues, who had hardly ever thought of marriage at all, and if she did, but as the natural consequence of *long* attachment; and he may have some faint idea of what those thoughts were which crimsoned the whole face of Emily Montresor. She indeed could not help feeling the speech as an insult in all its parts, but she knew also Lady Georgiana did not mean it as such; on the contrary, it was spoken in sin-

cerity and friendliness, and Miss Montresor laboured not to appear angry, while she thanked her for the interest she took in her concerns.

"But my advice," said Lady Georgiana, with one of her sweetest smiles, "is, like most advice, utterly thrown away! Well, take your own way, my dear, but if you come to town again, remember you owe me a visit, to make up for your present savage conduct; and if," she added, gaily tapping the still burning cheek of Emily, "you would between this and then allow yourself to discover that the age of chivalry is not more surely flown than that of romance, you cannot conceive how much more comfortably you would get on in life."

"More splendidly, at least," replied Emily gently; "your Ladyship must pardon my taking the word 'comfortable' under my special protection: I have a regard for it, and don't like to see it out of its place."

"But I think it is quite in its place. You will not deny that I am very comfortable, and yet I do assure you I never was in love in all my life, and how I was married I don't know.

I was talked into it, I believe; but I have gone on quite well."

"I am very glad of it," replied Emily; "and I certainly, in my defence of my favourite word, never meant to insinuate that it stood for being in love."

"Do you know," cried Lady Georgiana, "I am quite anxious to discover whom you ever saw comfortable, according to your acceptation of the term,—enough so to be enviable."

"I have not seen many people, I confess; but, if your Ladyship would know whom I ever saw sufficiently so to move my envy, I will tell you,—never but one person in my life."

"And who was she?"

"A young woman who lived in the country, where I passed my days of childhood."

"Oh!" said Lady Georgiana, "I see the whole; she was separated from her lover, till, time and constancy overcoming all dangers and difficulties, they were happily united, and are now patterns of conjugal affection and never-ending felicity. Is not that it?"

"That," said Emily, smiling, "is a very

pretty little story too, but it is not mine. The woman, of whom I speak, is not now young, she was probably never handsome, and is in a situation to esteem a plentiful repast an unexpected luxury. She is unmarried, and never, that I ever heard, had a lover, though she was young when I first remember her."

"And her comforts, child? Do, pray, make haste; I am impatient to come to them, for they do seem to me to be coming off second-best."

"You shall hear. In her younger days she supported by her labour her aged parents; and when they slept in peace, she continued to live in the same cottage with a sister, whose ill health makes her rather a burden than an assistance to her. Some years since, there was a scarcity, and the situation of the poor was taken into consideration by the gentlemen around. A subscription was raised, and one of their body appointed to see it properly distributed. It was reported that this poor woman was in particular distress, and to her the gentleman went. She confessed her poverty, but de-

clared it to be very bearable, declined taking the weekly allowance, because there were so many more that were in greater need than herself, and finally recommended her neighbour, who had a large family of young children, to the gentleman's *spare money*.

"He went as directed, relieved the mother and her little ones, and then returning to my friend Jane ——, said he was informed that her sister was ill, and therefore he must insist on her taking something to enable her to give some indulgences to the invalid. On this plea she acceded to the request; but when she found the assistance was to be weekly, she called in a fortnight on the person who had visited her, begging he would take back the last money sent, for her sister was now better and able to work, so that it was a shame to deprive those who were starving of the benevolence of the gentleman. Now, my dear Lady Georgiana, when that woman took back her money, and returned to her scanty meal of potatoes,* was she not comfortable? and do not you, too, envy her?"

* This fact occurred in Scotland.

" My lovely enthusiast," said Lady Georgiana, dispersing the tears that filled her radiant eyes, " you would almost make me a convert to the joys of a smoky hut and uneatable food. Yes, doubtless, there are pleasures other than the world are willing to call so, but they are difficult of access, while the others lie under our hand, and are adapted to the meanest capacity."

" May I be permitted, without being thought an outrageous pedant, to say with a justly celebrated author, ' *Nous plaçons notre bonheur au-dessous de nous ;*' and surely there is bad policy as well as bad taste in continually complimenting the inferior part of our nature at the expense of the superior."

" Good heavens !" cried Lady Georgiana, casting her eyes on the time-piece opposite to her, " I was to have been an hour ago, by appointment, at the gardens in the New Road, and here have I been spending my time talking sentiment with you. Good-b'ye, my dear Emily ; you must tell me more of your inimitable rustic another time ;" and away drove Lady

Georgiana Fairfax, to spend more money on a plant to grace her anteroom, in which she scarcely ever set her foot, than would have bestowed for a whole year the *ordinary* comforts of life on poor Jane.

CHAPTER IX.

"DID you know," said De Calmer to his friend, "that the Dessameres had left Brook-street?"

"I knew they were to go yesterday, for I took a walk with my sister, before you or the Dessameres were out of your beds."

"So, that was your secret appointment yesterday. What could you have to say to Miss Montresor, whom you see every day, so *very* particular?"

"Cannot I walk with my sister without some very particular reason?" said Adolphus smiling; "or was I bound to inform you of all Emily's motions?"

"This is affectation, Montresor: you must be pretty well aware none of them can be un-

interesting to me. And so, if you please, we will order our horses and pay her a visit, forthwith."

"If you please," said Montresor, in a gentle but firm tone, "we will do no such thing."

"How so, Adolphus?" cried De Calmer, his quick temper taking the alarm. "Am I to be taught whom I may visit?"

"You are at least to reflect whom you ought to visit."

"Spare your rhetoric, Montresor; I must and will see your sister, until she forbid it."

"While I live," said Montresor, steadily, though his eye flashed fire, "my sister shall never be called upon to say to any man what is unbecoming the delicacy and refinement of a woman's feelings. How, consistently with these, should she forbid you to visit her cousin, or to seek her out in particular? When Mrs. Dessamere was allowed to see very few people, and fewer still thought of seeing her, it would have been sacrificing the claims of humanity to a mere punctilio, if I had interfered in your visits. To have showed how uncomfortable I

felt, would have displeased you, and vexed Emily. I did neither: but now, Mrs. Dessamere is no longer the invalid before whose comfort other considerations gave way. She is in the country; not far, but far enough to mark the visits she may receive, and stamp upon them some individual character. What would be the character yours would bear, my Lord? Not such as you can expect her brother to approve."

"Adolphus, how can you be angry so soon? What have I done to deserve this cold title thrown into my face? I love your sister, and so do others: I confess it, which is more, probably, than they will do. You ordered me not to flirt with her, and to the best of my ability I have obeyed you: but not to see her! Allow that you are too hard upon me."

"And ought I, my dear De Calmer," replied Montresor, softened by his friend's affectionate tone, "to lose, in the wish of granting you present satisfaction, all idea of what my poor Emily may suffer hereafter? She has been educated with such very different senti-

ments to those which pervade the fashionable world in general, that the ground which you and she stand upon is unequal. She has an affectionate and grateful temper, is inclined to believe well of every one, and more than well of you, both as my friend, and as a person evidently interested for her. This is all quite well; but here let it rest. She is neither vain nor romantic, and will therefore be a great while discovering how far your regard goes, and what return she makes to it. Let the intimacy then, I entreat you, break off where it naturally might—with her leaving town; and she will return to her retirement with a warm interest in your welfare, that will in no way affect her own peace of mind."

"And be quite ready to dance at my wedding!" said Lord De Calmer sullenly. "A very enchanting prospect for me, no doubt!"

"And if she loved you, Henry, what would you gain? the satisfaction of having made her miserable!"

"What a divine idea, Adolphus! If she loved me!—How much more beautiful she

would be!—No, you can never know what it is to be beloved by such a woman; for there is none other such!"

"You are then determined," said Adolphus coldly;—"so then am I!"

"Why, what will you do?" cried De Calmer haughtily.

"Save my sister!" replied the other, "though I lose my friend;" and he instantly left the room.

Forbearance was not among the good qualities of the young Peer. "Am I," thought he, "to be schooled by a boy—a nobody? And for what? Would *I* injure Emily? not for the wealth of worlds;—and that he knows. Let him place her where he will, it will hardly be out of my reach!" And trying to comfort himself in the midst of his anger, he half formed the plan of calling upon Mrs. Dessamere without Adolphus. But he quickly renounced it; he dreaded Emily's enquiry after her brother, he dreaded still more the look of grave reproach with which that brother would meet him on his return. He loitered down St. James's-street,

greeted a few idlers, thought them more than usually insipid, and returned home as uncomfortable as he set out, with the vague idea of seeking Montresor. He found him in his room, finishing a letter. De Calmer took a seat in silence, and Adolphus, without noticing him, folded up his letter, sealed and directed it.

"Do you write to your mother every day?" said Lord De Calmer.

"No, certainly!"

"But you wrote yesterday?"

"I did."

"You are communicative, Adolphus?"

"I have nothing to communicate."

"You can listen, I presume?" said De Calmer half impatiently, but checked himself, struck with the expression of suffering impressed on the features of his friend. Montresor bowed an affirmative, and De Calmer continued: "If Emily *should* at some future period care a straw for me, where would be the mighty objection to our union? I suppose some time or other I must marry, and why not a woman I love?"

"If you ask my advice," said Adolphus gravely, "I should recommend you not to think of marrying at your age, with your disposition, and in a profession liable at any moment to expose you to dangers, well fitting a single man, but unsuiting the father of a family."

"So then," cried De Calmer reviving, "you are for keeping all soldiers and sailors bachelors! I suppose you will give poor parsons leave to marry, and breed beggars to encumber the State?"

"It was not to them, but to you, I was speaking; and I do think, even if we were to have peace directly, that it is great folly in a young man of one-and-twenty to tie himself for life, before he can be certain that the day will never come when he will repent his rashness, and regret that his wife neither extends his influence by her connexions, nor adds to his comforts by her fortune."

"You terrify me to death, Adolphus. But if I can only see Emily upon this condition?"

"No, Henry," said Montresor firmly, "not

even on that *hard* condition can you see my sister more, if I have power to prevent it."

"This is too unreasonable! I am not to see her! I am not to marry her! why, who the devil is to prevent me?"

Adolphus remained silent: he took up the letter to his mother, and seemed to ponder on the words: he laid it down, and unconsciously he sighed deeply.

"What," pursued De Calmer, "can tempt you to be making yourself miserable, as well as me, perhaps as well as your sister?"

Adolphus started, and looked up with a sudden expression of pain, doubt, and resentment. "You are trifling with me cruelly," he said; "but I will not believe you against yourself: you have not had the barbarity to blast the fresh spring of Emily's life?"

"God forbid!" cried De Calmer fervently, "I would rather strew its Autumn with flowers: but tell me, I beseech you, why you would disunite us."

"Because you are neither old enough, nor steady enough, to marry with any prospect of

comfort to you, and still less to my sister. A little reflection will teach you I am right; and if you will promise me not to attempt seeing her at present, I will not send this letter, which, I confess, is to recall her from her present visit, and which has cost me many a painful effort to write, conscious of the grief it will be to my poor mother, who has already known grief enough."

De Calmer's pride rose, but the kindness of his heart proved the stronger. "I will not give you all pain by my obstinacy," he said at last, after a long struggle with himself. "In less than a fortnight I shall be of age. I must go to my own house then, and also to Amesfort Castle. I will speak to my uncle: he has made one of your good worldly matches, of which he has repented ever since; and he will persuade you, though I cannot, that mine is the wisest plan of the two. Perhaps *then* I may get leave to see Emily."

"Yes, and marry her too," said Montresor with sudden animation. "If your love stands the test of absence, unsupported by any cer-

tainty of its being returned, and Lord Amesfort does not convince you you have been dreaming, which, of course, he will try to do; then, indeed, I shall not fear to trust my Emily's happiness in your hands — then I may be allowed to be selfish, and to rejoice in having gained for my brother the man I had chosen for my friend." And the two young men rushed into each other's arms, with the firm conviction that nothing hereafter could disunite them.

Not many days after this conversation, a note was brought to Montresor, as De Calmer was leaving the room, but, catching a glimpse of Emily's hand-writing, he returned. Adolphus smiled, but, having cast his eye over it, flung it across the table to his friend, without any comment, who read rapidly—

"Are we never to see you more, my dearest brother? I have counted the days in vain, for none of them brings you. Augusta laughs at my restlessness, and declares you have spoiled me, by giving us so much of your time of late; but you know I always was spoiled, and I cannot give up the privilege. We are not near

so dull as we were in town, for our invalid is quite alive, and our society is not unpleasant. There are several musical people near us, and these heavenly evenings we sit out near a sweet-briar hedge and out-sing the nightingales. Our nearest neighbour is a Mrs. Albany, a widow, somehow or other related to Lady Amesfort,—whose only child, Isabella, is to spend some time shortly with her ladyship, so you will meet her again. She is a very pleasing, quiet person: her serenity seems to depend so much on herself, that I much doubt any outward circumstance disturbing it; but she has very little of that enjoyment of mere existence which I thought always belonged to youth and health. They were once in very affluent circumstances, which are never alluded to either by mother or daughter. Mrs. Albany is too proud to solicit compassion, and Isabella does not think they are entitled to it. I once asked her if she was not alarmed at having to make her *debût* entirely among strangers; and she answered in a quiet way, 'It is disagreeable, but it is a duty I owe my mother, who is miserable at my

being buried alive, as she calls it. It cannot last long, and the dulness of being quite alone will reconcile her to my return for good.' Although I talk to you so much of my new friend, you may come here without any risk of falling in love with her; for she has no enthusiasm, and the charm of freshness and repose in her features which attracted me, would be lost upon you. General Montresor is so impatient for his daughter's return, that if you delay much longer, we shall be on the road for Wales.

"Adieu, my dear Adolphus.

"Yours, E. M."

Lord De Calmer turned over the page, exclaiming, "Ah! I was in hopes there would be a P.S." It was not, however, a very satisfactory one. "Mrs. Dessamere begs you will offer her apology to Lord De Calmer for having kept his Venetian ballad so long; she will take care he has it previous to his quitting town."

"Now really that is very pretty of Mrs. Dessamere to give me an excuse for a visit."

"I should rather think," observed Adolphus, "that her saying she will send it to you implies she does not expect to see you."

"Well," said De Calmer, laughing, "it is at least a very ingenious phrase, since it will stand for any thing any body chooses. Whether it was intended to mean encouragement or repulse, matters little to me, who in neither case can be ruled by it."

CHAPTER X.

THE long desired period of independence arrived, and Henry Baron De Calmer took possession of the moderate patrimony left him by his father, and which had benefited considerably by a pretty long minority, and the judicious care of his maternal uncle. He had been eager for Adolphus to accompany him to his own home; but the season was so far advanced, that every one had been willing to leave London, and there were hardly guardsmen enough to go through the regular routine of duty. Leave of absence could not be obtained, and Montresor consoled himself with the idea that it would be a still fairer trial of his friend's constancy and steadiness, if there was nothing near him that could recall Emily. The first

visit he paid his cousin was to announce De Calmer's departure, and he saw, with pain, the blank look with which his sister received the intelligence. He waited eagerly for some comment from her, but he waited in vain. Nothing was said but by Mrs. Dessamere, who, after regrets and eulogiums, made the ordinary enquiry into the state of his property; on hearing it was small, she exclaimed, "What a pity! for of course he must marry an heiress."

"That impatient gesture," said Miss Albany in an under-tone to Miss Emily, "says he will not."

"Indeed it says nothing," quickly retorted Miss Montresor, who tried in vain to shake off the air of consciousness she felt to be apparent. "Lord De Calmer, I suppose, will marry as other men of his class do, but hardly at his age, with the full enjoyment of his liberty strong upon him."

"I should not think he was a marrying man," said Adolphus mildly, and trying not to look at his sister; but her quick ear caught

the tone. "So," thought she, "my brother fears that I am flattering myself with having won the heart of his friend! Do I think he cares for me?"—and a thousand things crowded on her memory, which seemed all to answer yes. "But surely I never thought he had the least idea of marrying me. N—o, I believe not:" and not quite satisfied with her conversation with herself, she turned abruptly to Isabella Albany, to ask if she had copied out the verses for her?

"Yes," answered Isabella, fixing her steady eye upon her, "I have; but as they are in great favour with me, pray, when you read them, promise me to think a little more about them than you do at this moment."

Emily's pride stood up to her relief, and her anger kept down her confusion. With a look between wonder and displeasure, she calmly replied: "I shall take your advice, as I mean to do your favourite justice."

"You are an inexplicable sort of a person," thought Miss Albany, whose great amusement was the study of character. "It would seem

I have seen but one side of the picture yet; for here it is quite in another point of view!" Isabella was far from wishing to become the confidante of her new friend: on the contrary, she admired her the more for her want of communicativeness on that subject, on which Miss Albany had seen so many most overpoweringly diffuse. But she could seldom resist the temptation of showing her penetration, often as she had been the victim of this foible by being doomed in consequence to listen to histories without end or interest.

When Miss Montresor found her friend was really not inquisitive, she returned to her former manner; and as she became better acquainted with Isabella, found her conversation the best cure for that languid dejection that would sometimes creep over her. It was indeed a relief, after having uttered and listened to all those customary words honoured with the name of conversation, which every-day visits entailed, to sit half an hour beside Miss Albany, whose retentive memory and sound judgment rendered her at once the sort of companion Emily

delighted in, and the one most likely to be useful to her. These young women had taken opposite roads in every thing; even when they learnt the same thing, they were amused to find how rarely it had been undertaken from the same motive, or carried on upon the same plan. Emily was like a fine-toned instrument, full of grace and flexibility: there was about her an enchanting harmony, produced by the most perfect good taste, which good sense would not suffer to degenerate into fastidiousness; and the most refined sensibility, which the native energy of her mind saved from sickly affectation. Strongly susceptible of all pleasing or benevolent emotions, her generous incredulity of evil saved her from most feelings of a different nature.

Isabella was rather the deep and powerful organ, whose full notes swelled on the listener's ear, and sunk into his heart, without captivating by variety, or cheering by one light natural tone. The pupil of Nature was by far the most fascinating, but the votary of Art was the most independent. She studied others as a

science, but she knew herself also; and if the pride of talent sometimes overtook her, it was instantly checked by the only feeling able to check it, a religious one. Emily's religion was one of enthusiasm and love, pure as the untainted breath of morning, cheerful as the buoyant spirit of youth. Isabella's was like her own character, more severe, more omnipotent, more awful: it was serene,—not the serenity of an unruffled lake, but the tranquillity of the lion, majestic in repose.

An early acquaintance with mankind had given something of sarcasm to the feelings and expressions of Miss Albany. She had known all the consequence riches confer, and she had wondered to see that while she continued in every respect the same, the death of her father, and the loss of more than three fourths of their once splendid income, placed her upon a very different footing with her acquaintance,—and what hurt her more, even with some of her friends. She was too well tempered to complain, too highly principled not to forgive; but she acquired the habit of weighing all future

regard, professed for her, by the equitable scale of the character and disposition of the individual concerned. She used to say of Emily, that her first act was to make her transgress all her wise rules; for that she had been charmed by her, long before she had any one good reason to produce why she ought to have been charmed. But though imagination and sympathy with strangers was quite out of Isabella's way, it is certain that both must act to produce that quick perception, by which persons of superior abilities, and excellence of disposition, invariably find each other out; nor is the attraction of metals more certain, than that which exists between all energetic minds, however different and uncongenial they may at first sight appear.

Miss Montresor was comforted at her separation from her friend, with the idea that Adolphus would see her constantly at Amesfort Castle; and that her deep insight into character, and greater familiarity with English society, would be of considerable service to him. Emily was hurt at first to see how little her brother

seemed pleased with Isabella: she never imagined he would attach himself to her, but she was anxious he should do her justice, and almost ready to quarrel with him when she saw the little progress her friend made in his regard. Miss Albany only laughed, and assured her, she saw it written in the stars, that the time would come when they would be great friends;—"not," she would say, "that I could ever bring that beautiful brother of yours to swell the list of my vassals; but, if I don't acquire influence over him in less than six months, I give you permission never to believe my predictions in future."

"Well," said Emily, "I trust you may, as I am sure it will always be exerted for his benefit; but how you will set about it, is more than I can guess.

"Only give me time, my dear! Consider, he dotes upon grace, and timidity, and playfulness, and feeling, and all those things that are so interesting in a very pretty woman, and so insupportable in any other. He thinks me cold, methodical, matter-of-fact, and he is re-

pelled; but, when he wants a friend, and nothing else, one whose advice may be serviceable, he will come to me, and only talk nonsense with his mistress. Do you know, I am vain enough to be quite satisfied with the part allotted me."

"You are a very strange girl, and I am as ready to do justice to your wonderful powers as any one can be, but yet your confidence in them surprises me."

"If you had been called upon to employ your's as much as unexpected calamity has taught *me* to do, you would cease to wonder. But I am happy that you have been spared both cause and effect; for I feel, if I met myself any where, I should not like myself at all; and I don't believe any body ever did, or ever will, take a spontaneous fancy to me, which, *entre nous*, I think prodigiously hard."

Colonel Dessamere had been some time shooting in Norfolk: he was to join his wife at General Montresor's. Augusta and Emily proceeded by easy journeys, and amused themselves in viewing all the objects of curiosity on

their route. Mrs. Dessamere had travelled much abroad, but not at all in England, and, until the last twelve months, Miss Montresor had not been two miles from home, so that they had much to see, which furnished them at least with conversation on their road. Mrs. Montresor had quitted the General's some time, and now rented a small house in the celebrated Valley of Llangollen. Mrs. Dessamere took her house in her way to her father's; and, having safely deposited Emily, saw, for the first time, her once beautiful mother.

Mrs. Montresor was the mere wreck of loveliness, but, like the dying rose, preserved in decay traces of those charms by which she had once been so fatally distinguished. The colours of her mind seemed faded like those of her face; her feeble voice would mellow into greater sweetness, but could not rise to animation; her listless manner varied only when addressing her children, and its tenderness was never then unmixed with pain. She did not look like one struggling with some heavy blow of fate; if resistance ever had been made, the time was past;

all now was blank, desolate, and hopeless. Like one who uncomplainingly drinks daily of the dregs of existence, the patient victim did not venture to put aside the cup of bitterness,—did not venture to wish for that rest, which was in this world denied her. Mrs. Dessamere was interested and affected; but Emily, accustomed to her mother's deep and silent dejection, was alive only to the joy of again beholding her, and listening to her languid assurance that the mountain air had invigorated her.

The first few weeks of their re-union gave equal pleasure to mother and daughter; but when Emily had exhausted her powers of description, and her astonishment at many things she had seen during her visit, Mrs. Montresor saw with painful anxiety, that the prominent features in her mind were Miss Albany and Lord De Calmer. She spoke, indeed, more of the former, but her mother could not help dreading that she thought more of the latter, and that it was not unlikely her regard for a person so dissimilar to herself as Isabella, sprung unconsciously from that person being a

sort of link between her and De Calmer. She was the more confirmed in this suspicion by observing the quietness with which Emily waited for the first letter from her friend, and the restless uneasiness with which she looked for the second, which was to announce her reception at Amesfort Castle. Miss Montresor looked up to Isabella, as to a being gifted with nearly supernatural powers: with almost sickly impatience she longed for her opinion of Lord De Calmer; and such is the inconsistency of human nature, that while Miss Albany's approbation would, in her mind, have authorized and increased her high opinion of him, one single comment unfavourable to him, would, she felt, diminish her regard, not for the person disapproved of, but for her who ventured to disapprove.

CHAPTER XI.

FROM LORD DE CALMER TO ADOLPHUS MONTRESOR, ESQ.

" Amesfort Castle.

" I AM in the humour to philosophise almost as much as you, and not without reason, as you do sometimes: all my hopes, wishes, plans, and intentions, are overthrown and frustrated, and that by the very circumstance that a few months since would have given me the greatest possible pleasure. You will perceive, I allude to my regiment being ordered abroad. One thing would have made this more bearable—your going too; and of this I have no sort of hope. I came here immediately, on hearing what was to become of me; for this is the home I have had for years; and both my uncle and his dear little wife would have had a right to call me ungrateful, if I did not give my last days to

them ;—but I cannot do without you, so exert yourself to get leave, and join me here immediately.

"Yours,

"De Calmer."

Rumours had reached Montresor of his friend's destination, but he had, before this letter, had no positive information. He hastened to obey his summons, but various circumstances contributed to delay him in town, so that it was not until the fourth day after he received it, that he got to Amesfort Castle; when, to his inexpressible vexation, he found De Calmer gone. Miss Albany (who was established there under the protection of the Countess) told him, she had no doubt of his speedy return, as she believed him to be only paying a flying visit to Emily. Adolphus, with his usual prudence, declaimed against so unreflecting a step; and spoke long and eloquently against engagements, which, while they harassed a woman, and kept her in a state of protracted discomfort and suspense, often prejudicial to her health, were a tie to men, which

frequently annihilated the affection that had produced them.

Isabella heard him quietly, but confessed her fears were of a different sort; and at last ventured to say, "I am not one of those who complain of advice not being taken: in all matters not absolutely of principle, there is a great absurdity in giving it, and it is fortunate that it is not always followed; since, however good in itself, it must be given according to the feelings of another, and not of the person who is to act: consequently, when it is taken, it generally paves the way to an inconsistency; for a man does not the less revert to his own character, for having for one moment followed that of his friend. I think you have acted from a false point of honour, in fearing to urge Lord De Calmer to marry the woman he loved, and who has every possible attraction and good quality to render him happy, simply because that woman was your sister, and that the world might call it a good match for her. I hope he will forget all your prudent suggestions, and propose at once

to Miss Montresor, or his visit will be the silliest thing possible, combining his own precipitancy with your caution. If he hold his tongue *now*, while the impression is strong, there is no doubt of his doing the same on his return home, when time will have weakened it."

"It is," said Montresor eagerly, "that very unsteadiness that I dreaded for my sister. To lose a lover's heart may be painful, but how can it be compared to losing a husband's? or what force is there in words to express all the strength of wretchedness which lies in domestic woe?"

"I agree with you perfectly," gently rejoined Miss Albany; "but you suppose an extreme case. I am not apt to judge very favourably of human nature,—least of all, perhaps, of men; but I do not think them monsters: and where a tolerably amiable man marries so very sweet a creature as Emily, (with whom, too, he once thought himself very much in love,) I don't see how he can help loving her when she is his wife, as much,

though not perhaps quite in the same way, as he did at first."

Montresor shook his head, for no one gives up in an argument; but he could not help confessing to himself, that if Emily (as he feared was the case) had really attached herself to his friend, it would have been as well not to have checked their intimacy. It was at the very moment this conversation was passing at Amesfort Castle, that Emily walked across the vale in which she lived, to enquire after the children of a labourer, who had been sick. As she was returning, she saw a horseman ride swiftly pass; and as the road he had taken was not deemed very secure, she cut across a near way to meet him, and warn him of his peril. She perceived some country people had, with the same view, joined the stranger; and she was on the point of turning back, when she heard the well-known voice of De Calmer, enquiring for her mother's house. Emily's heart bounded, as, springing lightly from her elevated situation into the road, she called out, "*I* will be your guide!"

They were still at some distance from home, and, it may be supposed, they did not walk very fast. Yet De Calmer exclaimed, in the accent of disappointment, "Why, here we are! and those people told me it was a long way."

"They do not measure as we do," said Emily, with simplicity, and utterly unconscious of the feelings she betrayed; but so was not her companion, who, from the moment he first perceived Miss Montresor, had been in a sort of intoxication of delight, which prevented his arranging a single idea, and which had fairly put out of his head the excuse for his present visit; namely, his speedy departure for the Continent. Nor was his happiness clouded over by her reception: she did not, it is true, say half the civil things he would have heard and expected from any other woman to whom he had paid a visit; she did not even say she was happy to see him, for it was too self-evident a fact to require assertion; but she paid him a compliment he with reason was proud of—she forgot to ask after Adolphus! That brother so beloved, so deserving love, from

whom she had been some months separated, was not mentioned,—was not thought of; yet Emily's eyes could beam with joyful serenity, and her sweet voice, whose perfect modulations changed with every passing thought, now sent forth unalloyed the pure notes of gladness, which rose to enthusiasm, or sunk into tenderness.

The heart of De Calmer dilated with affection more fervent and more pure than he had ever before felt. The fulness of delight checked his usually high spirits: happiness is better than mirth, and never does it fail to subdue it. The appearance of Mrs. Montresor accorded with his new frame of mind. He could not have borne a less lovely, interesting creature for the mother of his Emily. He gazed on her with hardly the power to say why he came, so much was his attention caught by a person so unlike any thing he had ever seen before. The agitation of perceiving in the son of her early friend the decided lover of her daughter, lent to Mrs. Montresor something of her former animation. She spoke of Lady

Frances with an energy that astonished Emily, and charmed their guest; nay, in naming Adolphus, she seemed almost to look forward on his account with hope.

It was the first time she ever remembered her mother speaking of the future but with the deepest despondency. "It is," thought she, "the magic of De Calmer's presence, that extends its benign influence even to my care-worn parent;" and she could not be ungrateful! Hours may pass pleasantly, but, alas! they *will* pass; and the young lover was, however reluctantly, compelled to depart. He took Mrs. Montresor's hand with emotion—"When I return," said he, "I hope to be allowed to continue an acquaintance, to which I have so many claims?"

"When you return," said Mrs. Montresor, gently pressing her cold transparent fingers on his, "I shall at last be at rest; and that the more willingly, with the persuasion that the son of Lady Frances is worthy such a mother, inheriting all her strength of affection, all her firmness of principle."

"Believe me," he cried with warmth, "however unworthy I may be, to be compared with her, affection for you and yours has been an hereditary feeling with me. It is impossible I should change!"

"So may the blessing of a mother rest on you!" said Mrs. Montresor solemnly; and De Calmer, unable to reply, hastily attended the summons of Fanny, who, with her sister, was to walk through the valley with him. It was a cold tempestuous night, and the child shivered beneath its influence. At first, the selfishness of man appeared, and the lover, unable to part with Emily, tried to persuade himself it was the usual climate of the country; but anxiety for her health at last prevailed, and he gently urged her return. At that moment, he longed to say all he felt and wished. Distance and dangers would be between them, and to leave her without unburdening his mind of the weight that oppressed it, was dreadful—was almost impossible. Then rose the thought, "What will Adolphus think of me? He withdraws for a moment his guiding hand, and I

throw myself into the situation which I was tacitly pledged to him to avoid, for the present, at least. And why should I speak yet? Am I not sure of being always the same? and am I not sure she loves me? as sure as if she told me so? Oh, doubtless!" and he pressed the hand he held nearer to him. "No farther," he said at last, decidedly; "see what a night it is! Adolphus would hardly have let you come out at all; and shall I love you less than a brother?"

He stooped to kiss the child, caressed the dog that followed them, but to Emily he gave only a hurried "God bless you!" and the words sunk deep to the heart that, for the first time, was awake to the possibility of their meeting no more! Like a fearful spectre, the thought glanced by, "He may fall!" but it was too horrid to stay, and Emily would have thought it a distrust of Providence to have indulged it.

CHAPTER XII.

MISS ALBANY TO MISS MONTRESOR.

"Amesfort Castle.

"THREE weeks have elapsed since my arrival in *your* country, as you call it, and I have never found time to say how I got here. I have not, however, been less occupied with you and yours, than if I had written the most sentimental scraps of poetry to you every hour. You have seen Lord De Calmer, and heard from Adolphus; therefore, I may as well begin with my own history, that being the only one the aforesaid gentleman will have omitted entirely; whether from ignorance or indifference, is a point that, for the sake of my self-love, I do not choose to investigate too strictly. To you, who have a sort of passion for your mother, I

need not say with what reluctance I left mine; for an indefinite time too! and to take up my abode with strangers! You may believe I moralized all the way on the 'pomps and vanities of this wicked world;' and albeit little disposed to rural cots overhung with clustering roses, I did sigh for one just then, and fancied my poor mother in a neat quiet parlour, and myself working on one side of the fire, while puss purred on the other.

"It was very cold and uncomfortable, and I was glad to exchange my rattling hack for Lady Amesfort's easy carriage, which met me half-way. Not a leaf was left on the large trees near the house; and I thought their height, with their long branches sweeping to and fro with the wind, added to the desolate aspect a winter's evening gave to all surrounding objects. I looked for every thing you had described in such glowing terms; and scarce could my cold eye trace the spots to which enthusiasm or local attachment had lent so many charms. Still, in fine weather, I can fancy it a beautiful country; and I marked with pleasure

the cottages of the poor carefully repaired, and weather-proof. They were not swept out of the way, because a view might be improved by their removal, nor were they beautified in any absurd manner, to make the contrast greater of outward adorning and inward misery. The children looked healthy, and occupied; and I augured better of the Earl of Amesfort than I had ventured to do before.

"As I drove into the park, a gong announced the hour of dressing for dinner, and I was shown into my own apartment immediately. I was finishing my toilet in some trepidation, when a gentle tap at my door announced Lady Amesfort. Never, then, did I see a more faultless model of beauty! Her sweet accents and courteous greeting would have restored my composure, had I lost it; but struck with such dazzling loveliness, and with her extreme youth, (for I had fancied her my mother's contemporary,) I forgot the awkwardness of my situation, and only gazed in mute astonishment and admiration. She presented me to the Earl—a distant bow, returned by a pro-

found courtesy on my part, was all that passed between us.

"My mother assured me I should find Lord Amesfort still young and handsome; I thought him neither. He is shrouded in reserve, which looks like gloom and pride; but I am more inclined to think him unhappy, than morose. There is no animation of countenance at present, but surely it only sleeps: feeling has been there, it has passed away, and withered all it touched; but some hidden string, some secret chord there must be, if I am not much mistaken in my knowledge of physiognomy, that if rightly touched, would yet send forth notes of melody, though deeply tinctured with sadness. Lady Amesfort's sweet face leaves almost as much room for speculation as her Lord's, though in a different way. If he looks colder than he is, she looks more in earnest, more alive, more willing to be pleased than she really is. She is idle and dissipated, but she has a mind many tones higher than her education or her society. Little as she seems ever to have reflected, there is an undefined consciousness of

this, which has prevented her forming any friendships. She has heard sentiment laughed at, and she is ready to join in the laugh; yet it is not from coldness or egotism, but because she has met with nothing to excite it. I cannot help regretting her having studied so little the character of her husband. She would be the happier, and certainly the nobler creature, for having her dormant powers brought forward; and I never saw a woman for whom I should more dread their being roused into action by some foreign impulse.

"I will not tire out your patience with comments on my patroness, but express some of the admiration I felt for Lord De Calmer. He is delightful in appearance and manner. I cannot be a judge of any thing beyond, as I saw him but for three days; and besides, I could not well be impartial, as he paid the greatest attention to me, when he found I was *your friend.* Now, as handsome young men don't take particularly to me in general, the novelty of the case quite bewildered me. I told you, your brother and I would be sworn friends; and so we are!

To be sure, I cannot deny that we quarrel about ten times in every day, besides never very cordially agreeing about the veriest trifle; but he already appeals to me about a thousand things; and though he takes care to contradict me whenever it can be done with any tolerable regard to politeness, he follows my advice the next minute. I wish he would so far follow it as to spend the Christmas with you and your mother, instead of at this place; but he says Mrs. Montresor urges his remaining with his guardian; and I cannot wonder at a young man liking a very pleasant house, where he is made a great object of. The Earl, in his quiet way, pays him the greatest attention; and delightful as he is, the ladies, of course, cannot fail of making a fuss with him. I tried to give him lessons on flirtation; but he is not an apt scholar, and really listens to the pretty things that are said to him with an air of abstraction, or impatience, quite chilling. I have surely made up for my long silence, so I desire to be thanked without loss of time. Ever yours,

"ISABELLA ALBANY."

It was some time after Emily received this letter, that, as Miss Albany went into the library at the hour which she was accustomed to devote to reading, she was surprised at meeting the Earl. She drew back, fearful of intruding; but he called her in, and, for the first time since she had become an inmate of his house, addressed her. "Miss Albany, it was with a view of seeing you, that I came here now; so pray sit down and listen to me."

Isabella obeyed, wondering what this singular person could have to say to her. The Earl continued; "Is it as a friend of Emily Montresor's, that you take such particular charge of her brother, or are you interested for Adolphus himself?"

Most young women would have blushed, and hesitated; but Isabella was not like most young women. She smiled at the oddity of the question, and replied unmoved, "I was very much charmed with Emily, to whom I was first known, and was, therefore, on her account, sooner interested for her brother: but Adolphus is not a person to know

without admiring; and if he had never had a sister, I should not *be* less solicitous for his welfare than I now am."

"That is spoken with your own frankness, Miss Albany, and I thank you for it. I fear you will be less patient at my next question. Would you consent to become his wife, at his request and mine?"

"Not now, my Lord, at the request of the whole world."

"Alas!" said the Earl sadly, "'tis as I feared, and some other engagement on your part will overthrow all my plans."

"I am at a loss," said Miss Albany gently, "to guess what your Lordship's plans are, and why they were formed; but, if it is any satisfaction to you to know I am free, I will not conceal it from you. I would not marry Adolphus, because he would think me a stoic undeserving his vivid affections; and I, perhaps, might think him in a raging fever, when he was only in a fit of enthusiasm. I wish to be his friend, because I admire and like him; and because I flatter myself my cooler judgment, and

better acquaintance with ordinary men and women, such as even geniuses must mix with, may be of use to him."

"I sincerely wish," said Lord Amesfort, rising, "that your influence may increase, for I am satisfied it will be rightly directed, and I fear he stands in need of it." And, without another observation to explain why he put such unexpected questions, he quitted the library.

He left Miss Albany to reflections which, for that morning, put reading out of her head. She was aware, that in *her* fate the Earl could feel no other interest than that of common humanity; it was for Adolphus, then, he formed plans, which Isabella could not help thinking his extreme youth rendered premature. From what evil, then, would his early marriage shield him? In vain she considered: his disposition, his situation, all appeared to her to unfit him for engagements that would check his advance in life. Still musing on what she could not make out, she descended the flight of steps that led up to the library. In the vestibule beneath, she beheld Adolphus, who stopped to

ask if the snow was too deep for her to walk out. While he yet spoke, Lady Amesfort appeared at the top of the steps, facing them. She had her boy clinging in sport to her shoulders, and she ran so heedlessly with her laughing burden, that she fell.

Isabella, who never lost her presence of mind, exclaimed immediately, "The child is not hurt!" Montresor did not utter a word; but, springing forward, he raised Lady Amesfort immediately, and as she had sprained her ankle, and stood with pain and difficulty, he took her in his arms, and spying through a door, which the Earl at this instant opened, a sofa, he bore her swiftly to it. He placed her upon it, he knelt beside her, but still he did not speak. He dreaded to hear her say she was hurt. His anxious looks brought a faint smile to the features of the suffering Countess; she gently pressed the hand that held her's, and raised her soft blue eyes with an expression to which, from the first moment, the heart of Adolphus had but too deeply responded.

Miss Albany, who had gone for proper

remedies to allay the pain of the sprain, entered with the child, who was quite unhurt, and had assisted her in carrying the things. One glance explained the conversation of the morning. The magnificent outline of Montresor's face and form, full of strength and earnestness and powerful meaning, was finely contrasted with the beautiful sylph over whose recumbent figure he bent. Near them, but totally unobserved, erect and gloomy, towered the Earl. Isabella staggered beneath the weight of what she held, to which before she had not been sensible — an icy fang seemed fixed upon her heart—And was it come to this? and was the happiness of these two interesting beings the sport of a wayward, lawless passion? It was very dreadful, and she sighed so deeply, as she bathed Lady Amesfort's ankle, that looking up, the Countess said in her sweet accents, "Why, my dear Isabella, how pale you are! I do not believe I am so much hurt as you."

"How I wish you were not," said Miss Albany fervently; but she spoke in a low voice, and Lord Amesfort alone listened or understood.

"Shall I do that?" said he kindly; "you have, probably, not put on so many bandages as I have."

Lady Amesfort involuntarily shrunk back, and Adolphus started with a look to which alarm and confusion lent the appearance of hostility.

"Are you sorry for mamma?" said the child, looking with infantine wonder at his father. Isabella felt the reproach more keenly than the parents, whose thoughts were directed elsewhere.

"You are in your father's way, my dear," said Montresor, in a tone which, by strong effort, was steady; and, taking the boy in his arms, he withdrew to the window. As he pressed the child to his heart, he continued to gaze on its mother; but his countenance did not now betray the agitation and tenderness which marked it but a moment before. His feelings had taken another turn: it was no longer the being he loved, and she only, that occupied his harassed mind; it was guilt, and misery, and headstrong passion, and keen re-

morse. It was as if at that moment, the first in which he had ever seen the Earl bestow one thought on his wife, some new idea had flashed upon him, some dreadful secret had been revealed. The veil in which so carefully he had wrapped his inmost feelings, concealing them even from himself, was rent, and in this first overwhelming moment he had no power to think; he could only feel—feel like some lofty tree that the whirlwind has uprooted, but which, even in its fall, preserves a fearful consciousness of what it has been, and what it is! Isabella watched him with painful anxiety: it was some relief to her uneasiness to see composure restored to the Countess; her face was pale, but placid; and her manner, though depressed, lost none of its wonted courteousness, when she addressed her husband.

Miss Albany, accustomed from her infancy to direct her quick discernment on her own feelings, as well as on those of others, did not suppose it possible so little to know one's self, as to recover serenity without the internal consciousness that all was right. "There is but

one victim here," thought she; "unrequited love withers of itself; all will yet be well." While these flattering hopes enabled her to draw her breath more freely, the young Countess was busied accounting to herself for the momentary embarrassment which the Earl's unexpected presence had caused her. "I see him so seldom," thought she; "I was so like an intruder in his room!"

In the innocence of her heart, she believed her love for Adolphus to be no more than the equitable homage due to superior excellence: like all first attachments, it was so well intrenched by illusions, pure and brilliant as the symphony of angels, that a mind, which neither education nor reflection had contributed to strengthen, easily yielded to its enchanting influence. She had scarcely reasoned herself into the belief that her husband's attention had only surprised, without annoying her, than she looked round for Montresor. She started at the wild and troubled expression of his features, and, in her most winning accents, asked him if he were ill? His answer was like ice in the heat

of summer; and Lady Amesfort, who loved too devotedly, to have marked undismayed the most trifling change, remained aghast and bewildered at so sudden an alteration. Adolphus did not trust himself to look at her, but her silence gave him more pain than her reproaches would have done. He wished himself away, yet was rooted to the spot. At last he moved towards the door as gently as if he had thought she could not see him depart if she did not hear him. The child caught him as he passed, exclaiming, "Mamma wants you." He turned fearfully round, but his eyes were fixed on the ground, as he said reluctantly, "Did your Ladyship call me?"

"Oh, no!" said the boy, "she only looked as if she wanted you."

"She does *not* want me, child," said Montresor impatiently, laying his hand on the door,—but the tremulous voice of her he loved arrested him. It was only his name, indeed, and it was spoken so low, she might not have meant him to hear it;—but it was irresistible—and he looked up. Her tearful eyes were more than

he could stand; he forgot every thing but her, and springing forward, he would have thrown himself at her feet, and, in the frenzy of the moment, have poured out his full heart, and all his newly-discovered feelings, had not the cold, steady grasp of Isabella restrained him. "You are a child!" said she, with that commanding air few people ever thought fit to resist; "don't you see this awkward accident has made Lady Amesfort quite nervous, and is this a time to give way to your impetuous temper?"

"Have I deserved your anger too?" said he, in the quiet tone of despair; and throwing himself in a chair, he covered his face with his hands.

"I did not think," said the Countess, "Isabella could speak so harshly. This is a day for every body to appear in new characters."

"But we like our own best," said Miss Albany, laughing; "so never fear but we shall all return to them in time. Now, had I not better wheel you out of this cold gloomy apartment?"

"Indeed I shall be most happy to get out of it, for I have been very uncomfortable in it;"

and the Earl rang for the servants to move her as she chose, leaving Adolphus in quiet possession of the deserted room. He did not remain there long, for he fancied there was something in the air of the place that prevented his arranging his thoughts. He was not much more successful in his own room, but by dinner-time he had come to the resolution of paying his mother a visit. He remembered the advice Miss Albany had given to this effect, and now seemed the moment for adopting it. The Countess did not appear at dinner, and it was a relief to him; for if he had seen her he would have felt as if he were abandoning her.

"Have you any letters to Emily?" said he, addressing Miss Albany, as she rose from table; "I shall see her to-morrow."

"I will certainly write," was all she said; but Montresor had the satisfaction to see the gloom disperse on her brow, and a warm smile of approbation and regard replace her cold averted look. He spent his evening in gloomy silence and abstraction, and retired early. On his table lay a letter; he opened it mechani-

cally, and saw with surprise several bank-notes fall out of it: with still greater surprise he read a few lines in the Earl's hand, claiming a right, as his guardian, to furnish him with whatever was requisite; slightly touching on his overstrained delicacy, in having never taken advantage, while in town, of the permission given him to draw on his banker; and observing, that as he had more money in his hands that would be Adolphus's on his coming of age, he was not making him any present. It was worded with kindness, amounting to affection; but Montresor saw but one phrase, beginning, "When we meet in town."

"So, then," he cried, "we are not to meet before. I was leaving this for a short indefinite period, and my patron thinks fit to expect I should return to it no more! We shall meet in town! Yes; what a meeting! I shall not be under the same roof with her; I shall hear her speak, but it will no longer be her feelings and her remarks—it will be the language of the world—the language of others. I shall see her, but will it be really she? or, rather, would

not her picture answer every purpose as well? She will sing, too, but it will not be for me! others will listen and applaud, and on others she will smile." Such was the train of feelings that chased repose from the pillow of Montresor.

He had ordered the carriage early, but he now resolved to delay the moment of his departure, as he persuaded himself he ought to take leave of the Earl in person. "Since I go for so long, perhaps for ever, a written adieu would be ungracious," he repeated to himself; not choosing to own that the latent hope of seeing Lady Amesfort once more, lent him new animation, and conferred all the necessity on his change of measures. Before, however, he could give any directions, Lord Amesfort entered his apartment. He seemed hurt, almost agitated, and abruptly began—"I am sorry, Adolphus, to interfere with your plans, particularly when I approve of them as highly as in the present instance, but I cannot suffer you to go yet. Lady Amesfort's accident assumes a more serious appearance than I had any notion of at first. She has had so much fever, they have thought it

right to bleed her; and as she is to be kept as quiet and composed as possible, I wish you to delay your departure a few days, lest its suddenness might, in her present weak state, affect her."

This guarded speech conveyed meanings which brought the blood into Montresor's face. He did not dare express his alarm at Lady Amesfort's illness, his satisfaction at being detained thus without any fault of his own, or his anxiety to see her. He murmured something about his willingness to obey the Earl's commands; and then spoke of the money enclosed to him the preceding night. The Earl silenced him, by the repeated assurances that it was his own property, and, therefore, if he would not have it, he had only to send it to his mother and sisters.

CHAPTER XIII.

Two weary days Adolphus dragged on, not only without seeing the Countess, but without any message from her, or any particulars respecting her health. The Earl answered his enquiries in general terms, which were not much more satisfactory than the replies of the servants. Every one seemed in league to torment him; some by their ignorance, and others by their wonder at his being so inquisitive. He thought Lord Amesfort ready to appear obliged to any one but him for their anxiety for the Lady of the house; and one old woman, who had been long on a visit, and was a sort of relation, or dependant of the Earl's, put the finishing stroke to his misery, by hinting, with a very important face, that as her good Lord did not

appear alarmed, there were doubtless reasons for her Ladyship's illness that would be far from distressing to *him*. Montresor had never before felt the emotion of hatred towards any living being, and he now turned abruptly from his officious informant, that his eye might not glare abhorrence on her. He longed for wings to transport him instantly from Amesfort Castle; and such was the power of imagination, that when next he met the Earl, he almost fancied there was on his countenance less than ordinary gloom. It was only for a moment, for, as he scanned those lines of thought, he felt they were not intersected with one solitary feeble ray of pleasure. The tranquillity that sat on his features was not that of repose, but of stagnation; and when some transient motion ruffled the sullen stillness of the surface, it subsided instantly, leaving no trace behind.

Impatient at the ignorance in which he fancied himself studiously kept, Adolphus wrote a note to Isabella, who had never quitted Lady Amesfort's room. Miss Albany merely scratched with a pencil, at the back of it, "So much

better, that you may fulfil your original intention when you please." Montresor was mortified: would they, indeed, both let him go without seeing him? If Miss Albany had but answered his note in person, and said Lady Amesfort was ordered to see no one! He read the words over frequently, but could not see them in a favourable light. It was, he thought, doing an unkind thing in an unkind way. Lady Amesfort might act from prudence, from fear of her husband; but Isabella! why was she to be cold and indifferent? He crushed the paper in his hand; and with his spirit more depressed than he had ever yet experienced it, he sought the Earl to take his final leave.

His guardian did not make any farther opposition to his immediate departure, merely entrusting him with a parcel to his sister. Their parting was not unkind; but Adolphus felt uncomfortable at his own coldness, with which he reproached himself, as being a sort of ingratitude: dissimulation of any sort was foreign to his nature, and to be otherwise than stiff and constrained was, at that moment, impossible. When he had left the room, and gone a few

yards, he suddenly remembered something more he had to say, and returned. When he had quitted his guardian, they were both standing: a profound bow, on his part, and a half inclination from the haughty Peer, had concluded the ceremony of taking leave. What, then, was his wonder, to find Lord Amesfort, on his return, lying with his face buried on the sofa, uttering a faint moan, which was suffocated by rising sobs!

"Have you hurt yourself, my Lord?" he said, gently touching his shoulder.

The Earl sprang on his feet, as though he had felt a murderer's grasp; the tears trembled in his blood-shot eyes; but the wild sternness of his air seemed alike to reproach them for falling on any one who dared to witness them. So much misery and so much anger united, shocked the already oppressed Adolphus. He apologized for his intrusion more by gesture than words, and, with eyes bent to the ground, again sought the door. The Earl stopped him, he gasped for breath, and spoke, at first, inaudibly; but Montresor, understanding he wished to know if he had returned for any particular

object, told him, without hesitation, the fact. Lord Amesfort seemed content; he followed his ward to the door, saying, he thought the air would be of use to him.

The carriage had driven on; for Adolphus, who knew every inch of the country, meant to walk across the fields to rejoin it. The Earl, understanding his arrangement, turned another way, leaving him to go by himself, as the distance was greater than he was inclined to try. Montresor struck across the grounds, but, as he came within view of the stile he was to go over, he remembered that very near to it was a bower, which Emily had constructed in former days. "She will like to know how it looks," thought he, and he turned aside to visit it. Its entrance was concealed to all who had not known it formerly by the thick shrubs that grew around; and Adolphus saw with surprise a pony of Lady Amesfort's tied to a tree near it.

Before he had time to conjecture who could be riding it, he had shaken off the snow that hung on the leafless branches, and forced his way into the grotto, where, seated on the mossy

bench, supported by Miss Albany, sat the Countess herself. He stood transfixed in silent astonishment. No gleam of satisfaction crossed his mind at the conviction of her recovery; for love is a selfish passion, even with the most generous dispositions: he was alive but to *one* feeling — she might have seen me, and she would not!

"Pardon my intrusion!" he said at last in a frozen accent, for he was too proud to make it a reproachful one: "I am happy to see your Ladyship out again;" and bowing, he retreated hastily. His precipitation only retarded his progress through the overgrown brambles: he opposed his strength to the fragile boughs, which opened before him, and rebounding struck against his face.

"If you could be more patient, you would suffer less," said the warning voice of Isabella. It was the tone of kindness and commiseration, not of taunting reproof; and Montresor felt all it was intended to convey; yet at such a moment to talk of patience was an insult to his impetuous feelings, and he turned to her with a smile of withering scorn. She stood at the

narrow and darkened entrance of the grotto, as if purposely to conceal her who rested within; nay, more like some fabled deity placed there to guard her. There was at all times a peculiar grandeur and self-possession in Miss Albany's manner and air, which had often struck Montresor, but never so forcibly as now.

"Yes," he said, unconsciously speaking aloud his thoughts, "you are my barrier!"

"Only," rejoined Isabella in the same undertone, "from guilt and misery."

The Countess was like one stunned by the unexpected meeting with Adolphus, who had, as she thought, quitted the Castle in the carriage she had seen drive off some hours before. She buried her face in the withered moss, and was awakened to the consciousness of existence by the severity of the cold. She raised her languid head, and, perceiving Isabella a few yards from her, made a feeble effort to join her. Again the figure of Montresor was before her. 'Is it a vision?" she said, with the feeling of uneasy doubt, with which we sometimes view beings in a dream. The unsettled expression

of her countenance alarmed Montresor. He hastily re-assured her; and, grieved at her evident feebleness of mind and body, asked Miss Albany if she had strength to reach her pony, which could not be brought nearer on account of the bushes. Agitation and cold seemed so completely to have unnerved Lady Amesfort, that Miss Albany could not be without apprehensions; but her first wish was not to detain Adolphus any longer, and she answered hastily, "Quite well, presently." While she spoke, however, Lady Amesfort's head sunk on her shoulder, and Isabella could not conceal that she had fainted. She had not power to support her, and Adolphus received in his arms the senseless form of her he idolized.

"I beseech you," said Miss Albany earnestly, "lay her on the bench, and leave us;" but she spoke to the winds. A long, labouring sigh broke the spell of insensibility, and Lady Amesfort moved her lips without the power to speak.

"If you will untie the pony," said Adolphus, "I will place her upon it; and if you

can support her there, I promise to leave you that moment."

Isabella flew to the animal, and brought it instantly as near as possible, anxious to shorten this interview. Involuntarily Lady Amesfort returned the pressure of the arms that supported her.

"O that this little spot of earth were our world!" said Adolphus. "Would it not be a happy one, my love?"

"Too happy!" murmured the Countess, forcibly extricating herself from his embrace, and looking round for Isabella.

"You cannot walk to her," said Adolphus, following her thoughts, "but the sooner you get out of this cold place the better." And she suffered him to carry her through the tangled entrance of the grotto and place her in silence on her horse. Isabella impatiently threw her arm round the Countess, and Montresor reluctantly withdrew his. The sight of Miss Albany seemed to recover Lady Amesfort. She laid her almost powerless hand on the burning brow of Adolphus, and said firmly, "God bless

you, Montresor! wherever you go: but remember, we must meet no more!"

"Never!" cried Adolphus in a tone that wrung even the heart of Isabella.

"Never!" solemnly repeated the Countess with the strength of despair. Adolphus promptly made a sign of acquiescence; for he saw the Earl at a distance, and his immediate impulse was to fly him. Absorbed in the struggle of his own wounded spirit, Lord Amesfort saw not him, heard not the trampling of the horse's feet, and, striking into another path, spared his wretched wife the meeting. Having once quitted Lady Amesfort, Adolphus felt like one goaded on by some evil spirit; he fled with the swiftness of lightning; saw no obstacles in his way; sprung over new-made fences, scarcely conscious of what was before him; and stopped not until, exhausted and breathless, he flung himself into the carriage that had been so long waiting for him. His journey was long and dreary, uncheered by one sentiment of gladness. He thought what his feelings had been when he parted from his mother at the

Castle-gate, and how different they would be on their approaching reunion.

"Was her anguish, then," thought he, "a presentiment of all her son was to suffer? No; she could not foresee it: she could not dream how far he would forget those high principles she strove to instil into him." He surveyed rapidly all the sentiments that had arisen in his mind since their parting. He remembered what Lord Amesfort had said of his wife, how he had rejoiced in her happiness. "It is I alone," murmured he, "who was to destroy it. The Earl had said, 'I have not blasted the morning of her life;' but I have—I, who love her so passionately, so exclusively! it is I who have withered this fair flower I would so tenderly have cherished!" Montresor was of a temper to exhaust every torturing emotion upon himself, for no sophistry could allay the fever of his remorse, no self-control abate the violence of his passion. He had early given the reins to his imagination, and his weakened grasp could not now check them. The strong

line of duty once passed, phantoms arise at every step, and assume its name.

She loved him! and this love he thought a tie more powerful than any that bound her to her husband! The struggle, too, between the natural greatness of his mind, and that narrow selfishness engendered by his new feelings, involved him in a perpetual maze of contradiction. An ordinary person, who has seldom raised his eyes above his own concerns and daily actions, if betrayed into error, does not, at the moment, feel so much to be sinning against himself. He may regret and amend; but he cannot blush, as Adolphus did, at the inconsistency that led him, in direct opposition to those great principles he would have been the first to lay down; for it may be, he had never heard of them, or hearing, had failed to understand them. Montresor felt that he could hardly make a comment, however simple, that was not a sort of satire on himself: from this acuteness of sensibility he revolted, and laboured to justify himself in his own eyes. The

effort was often successful, for of what is our self-love not capable? but the success was momentary; some obstinate association of feeling with principle would rise up unexpectedly, and the labour of hours was defeated: it was a perpetual warfare of himself against himself, where transient victory on either side brought neither conviction nor repose.

His mother and sisters received him with delight, and, shocked at his own coldness, he laboured to conceal it. How was the mighty fallen, when Adolphus could stoop to dissimulation! His proud spirit writhed beneath the unwonted restraint, and his eloquent countenance but too fully told the inward misery that preyed upon him. Emily did not dare look at her mother, fearful of communicating her thoughts; but Mrs. Montresor, ever awake to suffering, read without effort the hearts of her children. The second day that Adolphus was with them, she called Emily back, as she was leaving the room. "Do not fly me," she said, in her quiet manner, which looked so like insensibility; "sorrow of no kind comes on me

unexpectedly. I do not wonder at the change in my son; I do not require to be soothed into bearing grief, I am bent to the yoke. Is it not said, the sins of the fathers rest upon the children? I know that I shall live to see you all wretched. I would rather have borne trials of any other sort,—but we are not to choose our punishments,—no other would have been hard to bear,—it is just and righteous:" and without moving a muscle, or having once altered the inflection of her voice, Mrs. Montresor calmly pursued her work. Emily concealed the tears she could not restrain, but she tried in vain to reply to her mother: she sought for words of comfort, but they were not to be found: she would have expressed a doubt of her brother's unhappiness, but the fact was too evident: she tried to say, she at least was free from care of any kind, but the words died on her lips;—could she say she looked back without regret, and forward without anxiety? she felt it to be impossible; and after framing and rejecting many sentences on these topics, she was forced to give up the point, and quietly resign herself to her usual silence.

CHAPTER XIV.

"WHAT are you reading so attentively, Emily?" said Montresor to his sister.

"Only this," she replied, sighing unconsciously, as she placed a letter in his hands. It was from Miss Albany, and Adolphus at once feared and hoped there would be nothing in it of Lady Amesfort. He read—"Indeed, my dear Emily, I cannot deny your assertions; I *am* a bad correspondent, and have only the excuse to offer of all bad correspondents, that I have nothing to say. Every spot, you say, on which my careless eye glances, is dear to you, and you would hear of them. It must be, then, from one who loves them too. I see the snow sparkle on the hill, and melt in the valley; but nor hill nor valley awake in me one

thought of other times. I gaze over the boundless tract of country; I think of him to whom it all belongs; and I smile at the insufficiency of all worldly possessions! I see daily new faces, and where I meet with them I study new characters; but if I give you ever so faithful a picture of them, you might meet the originals and not know them. We neither judge nor feel alike; and how we come to care for one another, I don't very well know; but that, at least as far as concerns myself, is a fact which I cannot permit of your doubting. 'Doubt that the stars, &c.' you don't want all Hamlet's speech, which means only, what in less sublime words we all of us say for ever, 'there is nothing, however great or good, that you may not disbelieve'—I only, who am possibly neither great nor good, will not be content with anything short of boundless confidence! Oh, egotism! how it strikes to the very root of things, and clings to the heart's core! how it can assume every grace, and palsy every virtue!—I once heard a celebrated Lady in her day (the biographer of Johnson) assert, that egotism was

the foundation of insanity; for, observe the madman, would she say—he does not fancy you or I are emperors of the world, it is to himself his whims point—'I am Socrates; I am a glass-bottle;' no matter what the idea, it invariably turns on *self*. Since he has lost the faculty of judging of others, I don't very well know on what else it could turn, but it was a whimsical sentiment that amused me at the time.

"You ask me about my employments. I hope my time is spent well, for I have little power over it, and cannot boast of deriving much profit or pleasure from it. This family are willing to have the resource of society, and their house, when in the country, is always full: they will, however, have only as much as suits them. The Earl is soon satisfied on that head; and indeed, when he *does* join the company, his taciturnity and depression do not make his dear friends regret the little they see of him. When the Countess is well and in spirits, she mixes more; but for the greater part of the day the Castle is more like an inn, where you do not pay your bill, than a society

convened to give pleasure to the Amesforts, who are generally the people least thought of or attended to in their house.

"Lord De Calmer has hitherto been always with them, when in the country, and his wit and cheerfulness enlivened others, while his presence seemed to give a sanction to their plans for amusing themselves. To this vacant post of half-doing the honours, I have succeeded; and a wearisome one I find it. Just fancy me, who have hitherto sat quietly at my work listening to what others said, or to what I myself was dreaming about, and hardly opening my lips from morning to night—only suppose me, making to every one some interesting observation about things supremely indifferent to every soul present, and after cramming every one with food, arranging with them where they should drive, what carriages they would have, or if the weather was too severe, how they could possibly contrive to employ themselves within doors—then furnishing them with some topic of present conversation for immediate use, making my best courtesy and retiring.

"This dull farce recurs every day; and then I walk with Lady Amesfort, read to her, or sometimes persuade her to have a little music in her own room. Her health is not very good, her spirits still less so, but she is better than she has been, and care and time will, I hope, remove the languor that weighs down this lovely creature. Perhaps you hear of her from others, and doubtless she is spoken of as a fair enchantress, whose brilliant smile lightens through the room as she enters. Alas! I am behind the scenes; and the vivid bloom of art, the gaudy attire of wasteful opulence, shine on me but cannot dazzle me. It is melancholy to live; for what has life to offer but a nearer view of sorrow, a better acquaintance with misery? Yet it is not unprofitable. We learn, what we should never learn from our own reflections, —the equity of Providence: we see with what an even hand misfortune presses on every one; we acknowledge our own presumption in judging of any person or any situation; we feel the insufficiency of all that appears most desirable to confer even transient happiness; and we

learn to desire nothing passionately, to distrust ourselves, to confess the inadequacy of what we most longed for to yield the enjoyment we had expected from it. All this must sound to you like very dull prosing; and yet, if we could but enter on life with these feelings, instead of acquiring them by slow and painful experience, what regret, what self-reproof we should be spared! It is idle to wish for what is hardly possible: on the fresh feelings of youth every impression is sharp and vivid; like glowing colours on the canvass they start into life, and the heavy hand of time alone can first mellow, and then utterly obliterate them:—surely the consciousness of this inevitable decay ought to quiet us at first! surely the thought of the future should, with rational beings, have some influence on the present!

"You may thank little Henry for being spared any more preaching; he is hiding my pens, spilling my ink, pulling down my hair, and exerting himself to the best of his abilities, to divert my attention from what I am about, and to fix it upon himself. I wish you could

see him, for you are fond of children, and I, who am not, cannot help delighting in him. The lower part of his face is like his beautiful mother; and, what is more singular, he has your brother's brow; you may believe I do not admire him the less on that account. Lord De Calmer first saw the likeness, and pointed it out to Lady Amesfort, who did not seem inclined to acknowledge it, and yet they are both so handsome, there is no reason why they should not be compared to one another. I conclude, by what you say in your last, Adolphus will be now in town. I am glad of it, as it was with reluctance I heard of his remaining so long idle. Indolence is the sure nurse of selfishness, and I should grieve to see your brother's noble character sink to a level with all the idle young men I am acquainted with. I do not think I shall see him in town, for I rather fancy, in spring, I shall return to my mother, who, as I expected, thinks this an endless winter. Lord Amesfort talks of visiting some property he has in Scotland, and it is not unlikely his wife may accompany

him: at any rate, I do not suppose either of them will return here for some time, and the Castle will once more be shut up, and excite only the admiration of chance-travellers. It has become almost proverbial, that noblemen never inhabit their finest houses. Adieu, my dear Emily; I have punished you sufficiently for having found fault with my silence.

"Your affectionate

"ISABELLA ALBANY."

Adolphus slowly folded up the letter, and returned it to his sister. He waited for some comment from her, but he waited in vain. At last he said, with an effort at indifference—"Isabella is right; I do no good here.—Don't you think so?" he added, after a pause.

Emily raised her long eyelashes with an expression of sadness and timidity. "Isabella, I have no doubt, is always right; for she never says any thing by chance, or without seriously meaning it; but I, who do not pretend to her judgment and discrimination, can give no opi-

nion about others whose feelings I do not understand."

"My sister! do you too reproach me?"

"God forbid!" eagerly replied Emily. "I am sure that you are right; quite as sure as I could be of Miss Albany being so. I do not wish to intrude on your confidence. I do not even wonder at its being withheld, for I am aware I could do no good. I merely cannot form any opinion or judgment upon a subject veiled from me. But, after all, you want no such feeble guide; your character, I thank Heaven, is no wavering uncertain thing, yielding to every outward impression. You stand in need of no persuasions of friends, even of friends as highly gifted as Isabella Albany, to induce you to act judiciously. From your earliest infancy you have been consistent, because you have never swerved from those principles which are strength to the feeble and comfort to the wretched. And do I suspect my brother of change?"

"Alas!" said Montresor sadly, "I *am* changed. I mourn my degradation more bit-

terly than you can do, for I have not the power to shake it off."

Emily's meek countenance became animated by sudden emotion. "Do I," she cried, "live to hear Adolphus say, there is something noble and excellent which he will not even strive for? something right to be attained, from which he shrinks, because it is difficult? Had any one else said this of my brother, with what scornful compassion I should have listened to one who knew him so little!"

"True," said Montresor; "it was once my creed that the most arduous enterprise had the most charms. I had till now met with only difficulty enough, in well doing, to give a spur to exertion and a zest to life. In the evil pride of my heart I said, nothing is beyond my strength. I am punished."

Emily's heart bled at her brother's tone of anguish. She longed to throw herself into his arms and weep over sufferings she could not heal; but she felt this was not the moment to enervate him by emotion; and in a tremulous accent she said, "None of us are exempt from

the general lot; we must all suffer; we must all be tried. We have no strength of our own in really great occasions; for how, unaided and unassisted, should we sacrifice that half of ourselves which feels most, to the other half? If any one says, I have always sacrificed feeling to principle, and I always shall, he has either no feeling, and then his stoicism, not his strength, saves him, or he is blinded by presumption and vanity. We can do nothing good of ourselves; but we know the source of all good, and we know that in proportion to the faith with which we seek it, we shall receive it."

"Oh! if it were only faith!" cried Adolphus, with a spark of his former enthusiasm lighting up his beautiful features; "if to believe in the Equity as well as the Omnipotence that watches over us, to admire what is great and adore what is good, were enough; then should I not be what I am; then should I not cling, desperately cling to the evil I condemn. Why do you weep, Emily? *I* do not weep."

"Then have you the more need of my tears, my brother!" And Adolphus, ever unable to

resist the tone of tenderness, kissed her pallid cheek, and entreated her not to make their mother miserable by indulging useless grief. Isabella's advice was speedily followed, and Montresor went to town. It was not, however, because she gave it, that Adolphus felt inclined to adopt it; it was because the anxious look of his sister was a reproach his irritated feelings could not brook; it was because he felt he had sunk in her esteem. Her commiseration was so tender and unobtrusive, he could not be offended, yet was he hurt at the idea of being an object of compassion to one who had hitherto looked up to him with enthusiastic admiration. The triumphant affection which used to shine in Emily's eyes, now gave place to painful solicitude, and the proud heart of her brother writhed beneath the change.

"There was a time," thought Montresor, as he released his heart-broken parent from his farewell embrace, "there was a time, when my inmost spirit could have mourned over thee, my angel mother; now I behold thy tears unmoved! The pain of others does not come

near me—the innocent affections of my youth are palsied—the sympathy of my nature is frozen. The cold grasp of guilt has withered every righteous and kindly feeling within me. Such are thy fruits, wayward passion! so dost thou enervate the mind, and harden the heart that yields to thee!

CHAPTER XV.

ADOLPHUS did not reach London so soon as he had expected. At the last stage he fell in with a young man with whom he had studied abroad. He was the son of a German, who had married an English lady, but she did not long survive their union. The young man inherited his father's admiration for English women, and was at that moment paying his addresses to one. She lived near, and he importuned his friend to accompany him to her father's house. Montresor had little inclination to comply; but, if possible, less to pursue his journey to town:—he went. As they drove up to the door, he asked Gustavus whether he meant to give up his country and settle in England.

"That," replied the young lover, "my fa-

ther would not hear of, and therefore, I must needs take Eleanor abroad."

"Then you would not have done so, otherwise?" asked Montresor, smilingly;—"you must be very much in love."

"Why so?" replied Gustavus, "*La patrie est aux lieux où l'ame est enchainée;* I cannot rave about the shape of a hill as you do; nor do I feel it incumbent upon me to prefer Germany, of which I know little, to England, of which I know much."

Montresor was not inclined to preach nationality at this moment, he therefore asked if they were likely to find any company at Sir John Barclay's.

"Plenty," answered his friend; "it shows you have never met Lady Barclay, or you would not suspect she could live alone."

"Alone with six daughters!" cried Adolphus; "she could hardly feel very solitary in so large a family."

"Don't throw people's misfortunes in their face, Montresor; her Ladyship would be too happy to diminish her home society. I dare

say you are welcome to any one of Eleanor's sisters; out of five you may be suited, if you are not very difficult."

"Gustavus, how can you speak so slightingly of a family you are connecting yourself with?"

"Zounds, man! must I be in love with the whole family? I really have not so capacious a heart."—And the young foreigner leaped out of the carriage, and preceded his friend up a magnificent staircase, through a suite of rooms, at the end of which they were greeted by a showy-looking woman, and courteously addressed by a respectable old man, who rose from his cards to receive them. Gustavus asked after the girls, and Montresor, who thought nothing older than his sister had any right to that appellation, was a good deal surprised when Lady Barclay introduced him to her six daughters, the youngest of whom, Eleanor, was some years his senior. They were all working, and the mother observed with a smile of complacency, that she brought up her children to be notable.

Adolphus, in the simplicity of his heart, asked himself, what it could possibly be to him whether the Miss Barclays sewed upon muslin or not? Happening to look up, he caught the eye of Gustavus, full of such comic expression, that his solemnity relaxed to half a smile, as he took a chair by Eleanor, and asked what work she preferred. "There is none I prefer to doing nothing," said the young lady, laughing; "but my sisters really do like, and understand it." A frown from Miss Barclay petrified Montresor, though Eleanor, for whom it was meant, heeded it not. A handsome woman opposite, with a good-humoured air, exclaimed, "You are very saucy to recommend your elder sisters; and perhaps, after all, Mr. Montresor does not like work, so you may have wasted your labour."

"Caroline!" cried Miss Barclay reproachfully; but on Caroline the accent of reproof seemed to make as little impression as the look nad done on Eleanor. Adolphus was amused at the unsuccessful efforts of the lady to restrain her sisters: he examined the pale face which,

bent low over her tambour-frame, seemed really willing to avoid the gaze of strangers, and its expression of weariness interested him. "Her merry, thoughtless sisters," said Adolphus to himself, "think her cross; perhaps she is only unhappy."

A letter was brought to Miss Barclay: she glanced her eye carelessly over it, and, as she put it in her pocket, said with an unaltered countenance, "Miss Albany desires to be remembered to you, Caroline."

"Isabella Albany!" cried her lively sister. "Is it possible? I never flattered myself with the idea of being remembered by her."

"I should not have thought Miss Albany a likely person to forget her friends," said Adolphus.

"May be not," replied Caroline; "but a very likely one to forget her acquaintance; and certainly it was equally beyond my hopes and my ambition to have retained a place in the memory of such a blue-stocking lady."

"Pardon my ignorance," said Montresor; "and have the goodness to explain to me that

term of reproach. I have not been long in England, and have only heard it casually named, without being able to affix to it any precise meaning."

"I did not mean any reproach by it," answered Caroline; "but I believe a blue-stocking lady is a very wise person, who knows all sorts of languages, talks about all new books, and hates and contemns cards."

"At that rate," said Montresor, "how few blue ladies there must be in the world! for I do not know many who do not play at cards, and not one who knows all sorts of languages; certainly not Isabella, with whom I have been for weeks under the same roof, and never heard her speak, or saw her read, any language but her own."

"I know she understands German," said Eleanor, "for I once saw a German book with her name in it."

"I don't know," said Adolphus, "that such proof is sufficient to convict her; but granting her guilty of German, that is but one language."

"And then," cried Fanny Barclay, who had hitherto been silent, "there is French and Italian, that every body knows; and I am sure I have heard, Mr. Albany took great pains with his daughter; and as she had not the beauty of her sisters to recommend her, he taught her Latin and Greek."

"He seems to have hit on exactly the right way," said Gustavus slyly; "but, I assure you, many people admire Miss Albany since the death of her sisters."

"It must be people of no taste," said Fanny spitefully; and all the young ladies within hearing joined all the Miss Barclays in expressions of surprise at any one admiring Miss A.

The Miss Barclays were all pretty, and not any of them ill-natured; but they were mortified to find the handsome stranger interested for a girl they thought plain, because they had conceived a prejudice against her. One of them appealed to Lady Barclay, who passed near them, with, "Only think, Mamma, of any one finding out beauty in Isabella Albany, of all people under the sun!"

"Fortunately for the variety there is in the world," replied her Ladyship with her wonted smile of graciousness, "there is a variety of tastes also. I am sure *we* have reason to like and admire Miss Albany, though, perhaps, not just for her beauty; for nothing could be kinder than she was about Henry."

"Miss Albany, you know, Ma'am," said Fanny, "told us Lord Amesfort gave that place to my brother of his own accord." But Lady Barclay having made a proper display of gratitude, was already in the other room.

"What a child you are," observed Miss Barclay sarcastically, "to have so much faith in spontaneous kindness! What reason have we to believe that Lord Amesfort would care if Henry was at the bottom of the Red Sea?"

"Oh! my sweet Miss Barclay," cried a little fair girl with the prettiest lisp in the world, "I will not suffer you to say such savage things. I am sure I have always found every body very kind and good to me, so that I have a right to believe it is human nature."

"I should wonder," said the immovable Miss Barclay, "if Lady Sophia ever found any people otherwise than kind; for I do not very well see how she should ever want any thing from others."

"Fie, sister!" said a young naval officer, on whose arm Lady Sophia hung; "what an unfair thing to call all kindness interested."

Miss Barclay remained silent; but she raised her head, and gave her brother a look, which seemed to say, "Beware that *her* kindness prove not so."

An impatient gesture in the young man showed that he understood her, and despised her warning; while Lady Sophia continued her flirtation with so many pretty airs and graces, that Adolphus, who had a horror of affectation, was lost in wonder at its proving an attraction to young Barclay. A waltz was played in the adjoining room. "Will not any one dance?" cried a middle-aged man with a strong Caledonian accent.

"Any one is no one," said young Barclay;

" but take out your partner, and we 'll do our best to plague the card-players. Shall we not, Lady Sophia?"

" Oh, it is so hot in there!" said the young lady, drawing back; " and dancing on a carpet is so fatiguing."

" And when you are fatigued, you shall rest; so come away, come away!" And Barclay playfully drew her on by the ends of her long scarf.

" Since you are not wedded to that eternal netting of yours," said Gustavus to Eleanor, " suppose you come and dance."

Eleanor bounded from her chair, on which she had sat yawning, or looking ready to yawn, for some time, and pushed her netting-box over the table, regardless of all things it came in contact with.

" Oh, Eleanor!" cried Fanny, " you have overturned all my work." But Eleanor was far away, and Fanny was obliged to repair the mischief unassisted by her sisters.

" What an odd family!" thought Montresor; " not one of them seems to care for the other."

The room in which he was, gradually thinned —every one went to dance, or to gaze on the dancers. Adolphus was nearest to Caroline, and she was also the handsomest woman in the room; but he thought her eldest sister was neglected, and then she was Miss Albany's correspondent:—he asked her. Miss Barclay looked up, and a faint colouring, produced by surprise, showed she had once been handsomer than her sisters. She declined dancing, but added, "Caroline will be happy to take my place,—she is more used to waltzing."

Adolphus had no resource, and he danced with Caroline. He found her pleasing and unaffected; but when the dance was over, and he led her back to the cooler apartment they had quitted, he was struck afresh with the deserted situation of Miss Barclay. She had not stirred from her seat, or, to judge by the diligence with which her fingers moved, taken her mind once from her frame. Traces of various employments littered the room; the chairs seemed as if they too had been dancing; the candles gave a dull light for want of being snuffed; the

fire was almost out; every thing looked abandoned, and in this comfortless confusion Miss Barclay worked on in the self-same attitude, and with the precise degree of interest that had apparently inspired her an hour before. Adolphus was sorry for her. "Do you not even honour dancing so far as to look at it?" said he.

"I have seen a great deal of dancing in my life," she answered.

"Is there pleasure only in what we have rarely seen?"

Miss Barclay looked at him attentively, and her countenance seemed to say, "You are a strange person to trouble yourself about what others think and feel." The expression was evanescent, and in her usual correct and decorous manner, she answered, "Dancing is more liked the first year of one's coming out than any other, I believe; but it is a very pleasant break in society, and I am always glad to see it promoted."

"This woman," thought Montresor, "takes shelter in a certain routine of phrases and received opinions, and there 's no driving her out of

them." Presently he made another attempt: "I shall probably see Miss Albany shortly—"I should be very happy if it was in my power to take any thing, or bear any message from you to her."

"Do you then know much of Miss Albany?" asked Miss Barclay.

"I do," replied Montresor, "know her very well, and she is my sister's intimate friend; indeed, the only intimate friend she has."

"Your sister is a fortunate young woman to have such a friend," said Miss Barclay,—then she paused; but it was evidently like some one who wished to say more. She cast a hasty cautious glance around her, and perceiving no one near them, she asked in a low tremulous accent whether Mr. Montresor had any friends or relations for whom he was interested in Spain, and whether he had lately heard from thence.

"I have heard," replied Adolphus, "but not very lately; Miss Albany is likely to know better than I."

"This letter," said Miss Barclay, taking her's out of her pocket, "announces a misfor-

tune which Miss Albany in vain endeavours to soften. My eldest brother is wounded, and as we should to-morrow read the whole account of it, she was kind enough to assure me his wounds are not thought dangerous. As you know Miss Albany well, and I do not, you might be able to say how far her authority may be relied upon ?"

Adolphus hastened to impart to the anxious sister his own conviction of Isabella's accuracy in all her statements; but not having the habit of self-control, he could not conceal how solicitous he was to know farther particulars of the action to which Miss Albany alluded. He rightly conjectured Isabella had her intelligence from the Amesforts, whose anxiety for Lord De Calmer was great. He was eager to set off for town that instant, in the hope of obtaining there some news of his friend; but he could not leave the house he had just entered so abruptly, without assigning the real reason, and it was evident Miss B. was most desirous to conceal from her family the calamity with which they were threatened.

He danced till a very late hour, for he dreaded the solitude of his own room, and was down at breakfast the earliest, intending to set off as soon afterwards as he decently could. The joyous tone of Eleanor's voice struck a pang to his heart, feeling as he did how quickly her gaiety would be dispelled. When Miss Barclay appeared, Montresor wondered to hear the same tranquil tone, to see the same air of placid coldness he had remarked when first he was introduced to her. She addressed every one present; she did not forget one of those enquiries of courtesy custom has prescribed; she even smiled, if that expression could be called a smile, which, like a ray of wintry sun glittering feebly on icicles, neither expressed nor inspired cheerfulness. When her eye fell on Adolphus, her features underwent a slight change; her cheek grew paler, and, unable to speak to him as she had done to others, she bowed slightly, and turned to the breakfast-table.

"This is not insensibility," thought Montresor;—"but what then is it? Could I look so, with such a weight on my mind? Are *we*

selfish in our very feeling, and do we clamorously demand sympathy for every sorrow that assails us? and are women, on the contrary, early taught to repress every sensation, and teach every misery to recoil upon the heart that gave it birth?"

Adolphus pondered not long on the questions he had asked himself, for his heart was with his friend; and his painful anxiety rendered him unequal to join in any conversation, or make other than absent replies to the few words addressed to him. He did not, however, lose a half-whispered observation of Eleanor's,—"Your friend ought always to show himself the day after a dance, to cure the heart-aches he may have given over-night:—that is, if he is *always* as spiritless in the morning as now."

Gustavus smiled—"Caroline should have addressed that reproach to him, I think, as she was his partner."

Caroline felt and looked provoked; and her sister, according to the sisterly fashion of the family, enjoyed her confusion. At last, this wearisome breakfast, which Adolphus had so

often thought endless, drew to a conclusion; and eagerly availing himself of the first motion, he arose, and, uttering a hasty farewell to Lady Barclay, moved towards the door. He was met by the servant with letters and papers. Miss Barclay, who had been for years in the habit of reading the latter to her father, held out her hand to receive them; but some of the party unfortunately were keen about a boxing-match, and, that they might ascertain in whose favour it was decided, they eagerly tore open their respective papers. Miss Barclay cast an imploring look at Montresor, which arrested him instantly. As she expected, the capital letters, "Victory at Almaraz, May 19th," caught the eye of the first person who opened the paper, and instantly the news was proclaimed. There was a sudden and awful silence. Not a single Barclay had the courage to ask after the person they were all thinking of. At last, the old father said, with effort, "Let me know the worst."

Lady Barclay fixed her eyes on her eldest daughter, ghastly through her rouge, and shi-

vering with repressed emotion. Miss Barclay had opened the paper, that she might gain time to arrange her words. Though prepared to see her brother's name in the list of those mortally wounded, she yet shuddered as her eye glanced over it. Sir John, who watched her, started up, exclaiming vehemently, "I *will* know all!" And she proceeded to state what she had heard from Miss Albany, which was so much more consolatory than the newspaper intelligence. Augusta Barclay ran out of the room, Eleanor fainted, and Caroline approached her mother, to repeat to her the assurances of her son's safety. Lady Barclay sat like one bewildered. She gazed alternately at those near her, without seeming to understand what they were speaking about. At last, pushing away some of her weeping daughters, she called aloud for Mary. Miss Barclay quitted her father's hand, and came round to her mother, who, grasping her firmly, said in a low, quick tone, "It is *you* I want. *You* I can rely upon. Will my son live?"

"Yes, I trust so,—I believe so," she replied

steadily; and Lady Barclay, clasping her hands, whilst a sudden flash of exultation crossed her convulsed features, sunk back in her chair in strong hysterics. All who, from sympathy or curiosity, had hitherto remained in the apartment, now, by common consent, abandoned it, none remaining with Lady Barclay but her maid and her eldest daughter. Sir John took the arm of Adolphus, who had come forward to vouch for the authenticity of Isabella's statement, and dismissed him at the door of his library, with a silent pressure of the hand, which acknowledged the young man's sympathy, and thanked him for it. Montresor, who had already been delayed so long, had no time to seek Gustavus; but, getting into his carriage, made the best of his way to town.

CHAPTER XVI.

It was late before Adolphus reached London: he however called instantly upon every one he thought likely to know any thing of his friend; but he was unfortunate in gaining no intelligence. At last, by an evening paper, he found De Calmer was a prisoner. He would have flown to Lord Amesfort's; but there, alas! was one he dared not meet. He wrote to Isabella. Her answer was cheerless. She thought he might be wounded; it was certain he was taken; and thus his promotion, his ambitious hopes of fame, his return to his own country—all became dubious. Miss Albany's despondency roused the dormant energy of Montresor. He wrote her a long letter in this sanguine spirit, contriving to make every circumstance assume

a favourable appearance. He sealed his letter, and thought himself convinced; but when again he took up his pen, and began "My dearest Emily," the tide of his feelings changed: he shook out the ink on the carpet; he waited till the tear had dropped and left his vision clear; still he had nothing to say to her—no comfort that she would receive. "My poor sister!" thought he; "if I was with her, I should only be a restraint on her grief; she would not weep for De Calmer before me." He wrote, however; and the next post brought Emily's answer. Her words were weighed; her sentiments somewhat calmer than those her little sister might have uttered; but the scarcely legible handwriting betrayed the sufferings that womanly delicacy and womanly pride laboured to conceal.

Isabella wrote not to her as she had done to Adolphus. She sought to soothe Emily, and stimulate her brother. She succeeded; for newborn hope sprung up in the breast of Miss Montresor; whilst Adolphus strained every nerve to get abroad, in the hope of being useful to his friend. His exertions, however, were speedily

checked by a most welcome epistle from De Calmer. He had been released on parole; and as his wound, though slight, required care, he resigned himself with a good grace to the condition of not serving, for a given period, against his captors. He was moving homeward, as suited best with his varying health; and Montresor, in the joy of his return, almost forgot how effectually his career of glory was stopped. Besides, he felt the better for the attention he had given latterly to all that might interest De Calmer. Aware that his mind had by this circumstance been much weaned from what before ingrossed it, he determined not to suffer it to revert to its former state, if possible.

His good resolutions were put to the test some days after they were formed; for, walking through a narrow street, his progress was impeded by a concourse of carriages. Some accident having happened to one, the others stopped. Montresor looked up mechanically; all his blood seemed rushing through his temples and singing in his ears, for it was the Amesfort carriage he almost touched!—it was her eye he

met! She drove on, but he remained rooted to the spot. "Surely," thought he, as gradually he recovered himself, "she might have spoken to me in the public street; she might have bowed,—have looked as if she was not sorry to see me; but she shrunk back as though she had set her foot upon a serpent!" He walked on musingly: he fancied she was altered; he longed to know if she were ill or unhappy—but whom should he ask? He longed to hear the sound of her voice, but he did not wish it addressed to himself,—he did not wish her to see him. He turned over in his mind a thousand plans for effecting his purpose. He persuaded himself, nothing could be more innocent, since he wished to be unnoticed. He felt anxious and restless, and he assured himself he could settle to nothing, think of nothing, until he had ascertained that she looked and spoke as she was wont to do.

It was easy to see Lady Amesfort, for she went every where; yet Adolphus returned home, nevertheless, from many a fashionable assembly, night after night, wearied and disap-

pointed, for he had not seen her. At last, at a gala given by one of the foreign ambassadors, radiant in beauty, and blazing in more than Eastern magnificence, appeared the young Countess. He drew back to gaze unobserved; but it was long before he remembered why he had so much wished it. For some time he could feel and repeat to himself only—"It is *she!* I see her once more, as through a troubled dream." She passed on, and he had marked only her transcendent loveliness, her matchless grace! He followed cautiously, and almost started as the voice reached him, for which he listened. The tones were clear and musical, but yet to her lover's ear they had not the sound he used to admire; they were joyless, soul-less, — they were not like hers. She coughed, and Montresor beheld with agony her cheek flush and fade in quick succession.

He went home with the conviction she was dying. He wrote to Isabella, to reproach her for having concealed from him what was of such paramount importance for him to know. He gave himself up to the regret of having for

one moment suffered his mind to wander from his fair victim. He stretched his powerful imagination to the uttermost for new causes of disquiet. He hated himself, and every human being—Isabella worst of all; every one but her, who to his fancy was blooming over her grave. He tore open Miss Albany's answer, almost expecting her to say Lady Amesfort's days are numbered. It was in a very different strain, merely containing these words:—

"I know of no complaint Lady Amesfort has, or any chance of her dying directly. If you do not grow somewhat more reasonable, however, you may have the satisfaction of creating the illness you now dream about. Why do you follow her steps? Do you not see the pain you must give her? Do you not feel the effect it may have on her husband? I could not have suspected you of such selfish imprudence. I. A."

Montresor felt the tone in which Miss Albany would have spoken these few words,—the look

with which she would have turned from him; and the influence of her commanding character returned upon him with redoubled force. I am too near the brink of danger here, thought he; the slightest accident would impel me into a vortex, from which I might not perhaps escape till the final wreck of *her* happiness and mine. Mine! he half repeated aloud—and he smiled in bitterness, for where was his?—He accepted the invitation of Gustavus to be present at his marriage, which good accounts of young Barclay allowed them to fix without more delay.

A gay nuptial was not just what he was most fit for; but still it was an object, something to do, something besides self to think of. The affliction in which he had left the Barclay family was a claim on the kindliness of his nature. That affliction was giving way indeed to mirth and festivity, but still they had once interested him, and he felt a desire to know them better than he did his other acquaintance. He went, and was amused. There was something in the happiness of his friend that formed a keen contrast to his own state of mind. Over the love of Adolphus,

all the enthusiasm of his nature,—all his shuddering horror of its guilt, combined to cast a deep shade of wild gloominess. The playful satisfaction of Gustavus, his perfect security, rendered his love a sort of blameless halcyon, that, but for his frolicksome temper, might have proved insipid, even to himself, and still more so to an indifferent person.

Eleanor looked very handsome and very happy. Her mother gazed on her with satisfaction, and inwardly prayed her marriage might bring luck to her sisters. Those sisters by no means appeared disposed to resent the wish, had it been audibly expressed,—excepting the eldest, who alone, of all the company, appeared to be entirely taken up with Eleanor, to the exclusion of every private individual feeling. Her simplicity and quietude pleased Adolphus. He felt he might converse with her, without her fancying he would make love to her; and he would therefore sit by her for hours, as she industriously plied her eternal needle.

"There must be some hidden charm," he

observed to her one morning, "in that frame of yours, for you cannot keep your fingers off it for half a minute."

"Why should I, when I can talk and listen as well working?"

"Not quite so well, I think;—and then, such indefatigable employment is such a satire on idle people: it quite fidgets me."

"I am sorry for that," said Miss Barclay, smiling good-humouredly; "and I promise to give my fingers a holiday, if you will start some very interesting topic; but, to confess the honest truth, I have not spirits to be idle; and this mechanical motion that torments you, is a sort of shelter to me, and saves me sometimes from feeling too painfully the vacuum of my own mind."

"I will not," said Montresor, "ask, if, like opium to the suffering patient, its torpor does not add to the original disease; because I have lately learned not to preach to others, from finding how unequal I am, in my own case, to do any one of the things I would so strenuously recommend to them. I can however furnish

you with a topic very interesting to me, if not to you:—tell me all you know of Isabella Albany. My sister says, there has been a great change in her mother's circumstances, and I should like to hear all you know on the subject."

"That you shall do directly, if you will come out into the plantation; for it is annoying to hear Isabella Albany discussed by all these giddy people."

Montresor was quite of her opinion, and, besides, thought it a sort of triumph to get Miss Barclay from her work. After a few moments' silence on both sides, his companion began: "You have seen Mrs. Albany, and, I need not tell you, her disposition has nothing in it to attract, or to repel. Well-born and well-educated, she retains the polished manners of her youth, which many who have lived so long out of the world, lose as entirely as if they had never possessed them. She has been less fortunate in her beauty: in my memory, she could boast of considerable remains, and they have yielded less to the hand of Time, than to the

pressure of grief. She brought Mr. Albany a fine fortune; and, as he had very good preferment in the Church, they lived handsomely. They had four children—a boy, who was his mother's darling, and certainly was a very fine creature, and three girls: the two eldest were twins, and almost painfully alike; yet no one could deny their admiration to such faultless forms. They were good-humoured, accomplished — very like most young ladies — and what we are agreed to call amiable, because they were very pleasing to look at, and quite harmless. That Isabella should be their sister, would be surprising, if we forgot to take into the account the difference of their education. She was many years younger than Anne and Sophy: her mother longed for a boy,—and before she could reasonably be expected to recover from the disappointment of having a girl, it was discovered that the little Isabella was a plain girl!

"There was no recovering two such shocks so near together; and Mrs. Albany kept the child in the nursery, and might have forgotten

its existence, had it not formed so prominent a part in the conversation of her son. Frank Albany was a wild schoolboy at that time, but full of affection towards every living thing. He often murmured at not getting leave to turn his delicate sisters into romps, and make them climb the trees with him in search of birds'-nests. The baby was a plaything no one interfered with him about. He had it all his own way,—made the nurses dress it after his fancy, lugged the poor infant about everywhere, and, as she grew older, took the entire management of her upon himself.

"Meanwhile, the elder sisters grew into girls, and very handsome ones. Without being clever, they were expert at most things they wished to do. Mrs. Albany spared neither pains nor expense for their improvement; and her husband at last hinted, it would be as well if Frank's child, as they called Isabella, partook of the same advantages. Mrs. Albany agreed to this observation, as she would have done to any other uttered by her husband, but forgot to take any steps in consequence. Mr.

Albany was a learned and rather an austere man: he did not like children; but, rigidly just in all his notions, he felt it his duty to attend to a child neglected by others. He found, with no small surprise, that his volatile son had had the patience to instruct his young sister himself, and consequently that, in many points of useful information, she was much more advanced than Anne and Sophy. No doubt, Isabella must have had good natural parts; but her excessive fear of her parents, which lasted for some years, made her work like the mole, silently and in the dark, for she was not reckoned by them a quick child. Her uncommon memory and accuracy first gave her father the idea of making her a scholar. She entered into the plan with earnestness, and soon became a great favourite, and, what favourites seldom are—a very useful person.

"The first sorrow that chilled the heart of the young Isabella, was the estrangement of her brother—of that brother who had been to her, parent, nurse, companion, instructor, for so many years! He fell into bad hands, and a

few, very few years of mad dissipation plunged him into a premature grave. He was meant for something better——" Miss Barclay's voice had been hitherto unbroken: she paused, and averted her head. The hand that rested on Montresor's arm, which he had offered her at the beginning of their walk, just trembled, and again was motionless. She resumed in rather a faint tone, which, by degrees, grew again animated.

"It was a grievous loss to Isabella; it broke the spirit of her father, and brought her mother to the brink of the grave. Mrs. Albany, however, recovered, and her mind insensibly reverted to other things. She took her eldest daughters into public, and rejoiced in the boundless admiration they excited. Mr. Albany lived more retired than ever, after he lost Frank: *he* knew what he thought his wife need not, that the extravagance of this idolized son had dissipated all the property he had assigned to his girls, and indeed involved himself so much, that the strictest economy was necessary to redeem his credit. Mrs. Albany had been

ordered to some bathing-place for her health; she could not resist showing her daughters everywhere; and the quiet parsonage was deserted by all, save its master and Isabella. A few elderly men of talent, who had known Mr. Albany well in former days; a few neighbours, who thought he must be dull alone; and a few of their sons, who came to wonder at the young Miss that knew all the dead languages, formed their society; and Isabella, living among them, and unaccustomed to think of women, or care for them, acquired an unshrinking manner and dauntless spirit, that made her very unpopular, and shocked her mother."

Adolphus was about to interrupt Miss Barclay, who, perceiving it, smiled, and added hastily, "You would say, her manner *now* is excellent: no doubt, she has had much sorrow since, which softens the angles of a really good character; and she has also been, since her father's death, thrown into the society of women, and compelled by circumstances to bend to their employments and avocations, which has given her as feminine an appearance

as any one could wish. In one of Mrs. Albany's frequent excursions, she met with Sir Gerard Homer. He is an agreeable person, and has, besides all the requisites for popularity, fortune, family, and connexions. He proposed for Anne, and was accepted. Had poor Frank lived, he would have stopped this ill-starred match, and discovered, what was unknown to his mother, the doubtful character of his sister's lover. Mrs. Albany was overjoyed: she had expected him to marry one of the girls, but was unable to discover which he preferred, and perhaps that was more than ever he discovered himself. He married Anne; and whether he had any temptation for the jealousy he soon so furiously betrayed, or whether her tranquillity was the sole ground of his suspicions, I know not;—it is certain that he had soon the baseness to tell her, he had at last made up his mind, and that it was Sophy he had meant to marry.

"Poor Sophy had either more sensibility than her sister, or more capability of falling in love; for she had seriously attached herself to Sir Gerard, and had no doubt of his attachment

to her being equally decided. She was thunderstruck at the proposal coming to her sister; but there was no remedy, and she comforted herself in the true heroine style, that her sister at least would be happy, and she was to enjoy her felicity. Alas! there was none to enjoy; and when Sophy found her presence did but add to her sister's misery, from the strange manner in which Sir Gerard conducted himself towards her, she returned to her father's house. The tendency in the family to consumption, which had so fatally fastened on their brother, seemed now to threaten the girls. Lady Homer lived to give birth to a son; and Mrs. Albany was supporting the dying frame of Sophy in her arms, when the intelligence reached her of Anne's departure from this world of sorrow. It was remarkable that the twins, though separated from each other, and therefore unlikely to be influenced by mental sympathy, invariably grew worse and better, feeble or more cheerful, on the same days. Sophy lived two days after her sister, but was insensible from the hour of Anne's death.

Sir Gerard sent the infant to Mrs. Albany, and offered to come himself; but this, Mrs. Albany forbade. "Tell him," said the wretched and indignant parent, "I have no more daughters for him to destroy." Some time previous to the marriage of one sister and the death of both, Isabella had formed an intimacy with Edward Chaloner, a man who has since distinguished himself in public life. He was then very young, but fond of study, and fonder of Isabella. There was always something he could not do without her assistance,—some book nobody but Miss Albany had,—some question nobody but Miss Albany could answer. He had many excellent qualities, which might have recommended him to any one; but on Isabella's heart he had a claim which bound her to him in adamantine chains. He had been the chosen friend of her brother at College; he was thought to have had influence with him, and he was known to have exerted it always beneficially. It was soothing, when the censorious and the indifferent raised the cry against that highly-gifted being, over whose errors she had

shed more bitter tears than fell even on his grave, it was like balm on the wounded heart, to hear *one* voice raised in praise of his virtues—in extenuation of his faults—in mournful tenderness for his loss! Oh, such accents *must* have fallen on the greedy ear, like the dew of Heaven on the fainting wanderer in the desert!"

The tone of unwonted earnestness in which Miss Barclay spoke, made Adolphus involuntarily look up. He was struck at the alteration in her countenance: her pale cheek glowed; her downcast eye, fraught with meaning, was raised in dewy light to Heaven,—it was the flash of a moment, which, almost before it could be marked, had passed away. In her usual tone of uninterested quietude, she continued: "While Isabella and her young lover continued under her father's eye only, all went on prosperously; but when her sisters were taken from them, Mrs. Albany had no spirits for her former excursions; and, as soon as she could think of any thing but her grief, she began to wonder at young Chaloner being so domesticated among

them. She expressed her wonder, but it was not exactly to the right people: the whole neighbourhood were aware of her sentiments; but those it most concerned had no guess of them. To have spoken to Mr. Albany might have seemed like blaming him; and though she loved her husband, it was not that perfect love which casteth out fear. To Isabella she could not well make any remark; for, though evidently enjoying the society of their guest, there was nothing in her nature that allowed of flirtation, and the interest she took in young Chaloner was of too deep a nature, and had been too long taking root in her mind, to be expressed by any trifling airs of coquetry. Besides, their conversation so seldom ran on any topic Mr. Albany understood, that she did not know how or when to interfere, and it ended by her not interfering at all. For this she has been much, and, I think, unfairly blamed; but we are all prone to judge of actions by their consequences, and to expect of people more than they can perform.

"Edward Chaloner lost his eldest brother;

and Miss Albany, whose father's distressed circumstances were guessed at, was no longer a fit match for him: so, at least, thought his parents, and they laboured to cut the Gordian knot of his intimacy there. The young man resisted; and it was found that some knots must be untied, and cannot be suddenly divided. An apoplectic stroke had threatened the life of Mr. Albany. He struggled through it; but it weakened his intellects; and the last few months of his existence, Isabella had the dreadful spectacle of mental decay, added to bodily illness, to witness in a parent she had loved so warmly when she had learned to know him, and had at all times so fondly admired.

"She alone was equal to the arrangement of his papers, and soon found that with her father's life would cease nearly all their means of subsistence. With a prudence and forethought none could have expected from her age, she made every necessary enquiry, and took every step towards lightening the evil to her mother, and in the mean time carefully concealed from her this increase of calamity, rightly judging it

would serve as a break to her grief when her husband should die, and would forcibly turn her mind into another channel. She passed some arduous months, and, no doubt, thought them at the time most hard to bear; yet she was not entirely without consolation. Misfortune, and the exemplary manner in which she bore it, served but to bind Edward more closely to her. In an ordinary way he could often be useful to her: his advice, his personal exertions, were far from valueless; but his warm sympathy, his ardent devotion, were better still. *Her* parents, *her* concerns, *her* health seemed to, and indeed did occupy him, to the exclusion of every other thing.

"There is in the consciousness of being fervently loved, a mingled triumph and tenderness, that, more than any other strong feeling, influences every moment of our lives, and gives the tone to the mind, and the colour to the thoughts. Whilst breathing in such an atmosphere, the arrows of misfortune reach us indeed; but they come blunted and softened. It is only when we know we suffer and feel at the same time,

that it does not signify, that the wearied mind droops under a sense of its own desolateness. Isabella was anxious and unhappy; but there was nothing to palsy her active disposition, and she went through her duties with energy as well as steadiness. Her father died. Every thing had been prepared and foreseen; and they left the place in which so many years had been spent, and which, to Isabella, as well as her mother, was hallowed by so many tender recollections, almost immediately.

"It was on quitting the neighbourhood that Miss Albany discovered, by accident, the uneasiness of the Chaloners, respecting their son, and the former observations of her mother on the subject. I do not believe that, before that hour, Isabella thought she was ever likely to marry Edward. She was so unlike other girls, she had associated with so few, if any; she had given her mind so little to the romance of youth, or the more worldly calculations of age, that '*a good establishment*' would probably have been a phrase beyond her comprehension. Whether her pride was hurt at such ideas and

plans being attributed to her by the Chaloners; whether her lover made no definite offer, which she could, consistent with her high notions of honour and integrity towards every one, accept; or whether, in the true spirit of enthusiastic love, she gave him up, without a doubt of his constancy arising in her mind, I do not know her well enough to determine.

"He went abroad shortly after, and his parents certainly expressed themselves about her and her conduct in terms of boundless admiration. I ought to have known better. I had been long enough in the world to have been better acquainted with its ways, and yet I *did* flatter myself time would work miracles, and that all parties would one day be brought to agree to a union so very desirable in all really essential points. I was mistaken: the Chaloners, having acquitted themselves to their own conscience by the eulogiums pronounced on Isabella, forgot her existence. It is not very long since Edward Chaloner returned from the Continent, after an absence scarcely exceeding three years—but he returned with a wife!"

Montresor started. He was utterly unprepared for such a conclusion; and he looked at Miss Barclay, expecting she would in some way qualify so abrupt an assertion. But Miss Barclay had really done. She had told all she knew, and she seemed little disposed to account for the conduct of Edward Chaloner, to censure his inconstancy, or to allude in any way to the feelings of Miss Albany. Adolphus at last timidly asked how Isabella seemed to bear it.

"How!" said Miss Barclay, with an expression almost of bitterness, "can such things be known? I am ignorant of the details, the circumstances, whatever they might have been, that must have tended either to lessen the shock, or to add to its strength. I know the fact; and I see Isabella, as I see thousands, mixing in the throng and playing her part in the world. It is not for me to say, whether she has lost her interest in the things she does, or her confidence in those she may yet hope for. Her manner is milder than it used to be, her expressions more vague, her countenance less animated: but these changes I discovered be-

cause I sought for them; and to many, I make no doubt, they would appear illusive, for the alteration in her altogether, since the death of her father, has been gradual, and she was little known before."—They had now reached the house, and Miss Barclay entered before Adolphus could thank her for the communications he had solicited and received.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE joyful tidings of Lord De Calmer's return, found Adolphus yet lingering at Sir John Barclay's. The beautiful Caroline was congratulated on the occasion, and she herself had no objection to believe she was the attraction. Lady Barclay, indeed, saw easily that the protracted visit of young Montresor had as little to do with love for her daughters as for herself. "But who knows," thought this prudent mother, "what idleness may bring a man to at last?—besides, if he will but stay long enough, every one will tell him it is expected he should marry some one of the girls, and he will end by thinking that every one cannot be wrong."

A few lines from the sea-port town, where

Lord De Calmer, still weak and suffering, had landed, summoned his impatient friend far out of the reach of Lady Barclay's speculations. The heart of Adolphus, chilled or pained on every other side, turned in a full tide of unrepressed tenderness to his destined brother. Absorbed in his present feelings, giving free loose to his vivid imagination, which painted a futurity of bliss for Emily and De Calmer, his journey appeared neither long nor tedious, and he burst into his friend's apartment almost forgetting he was to find him an invalid. The warm glow of mingled feelings was checked by one glance at De Calmer, who, worn to a shadow, pale and almost powerless, held out his emaciated hand to Adolphus, and did not trust his voice to utter the welcome he so deeply felt. Montresor was not less silent: shocked at the fearful change in his brilliant friend, he remained for a moment like one overcome by the sudden consciousness of the vanity of human speculations and wishes. He gazed on the altered features of the sufferer with intense anxiety,

and shuddered as he thought on what a slender thread hung the life on which he had fondly hoped so much felicity would be lavished.

"Vain dreamer!" murmured he to himself, as, sighing deeply, he took his seat beside the couch of his friend. De Calmer raised his languid head and smiled;—it was that peculiar and beautiful smile, which had so forcibly struck him before their acquaintance had commenced, and which he had then felt to recognize. Even now, when engrossed by so many feelings, it struck him in the same light, and a half idea flashed across him that he had sometimes seen Emily look so; but the thought was evanescent, for this was not a moment to dwell upon trifles. De Calmer had suffered much from his voyage, from bad accommodations, improper diet, and constitutional delicacy. His ardent spirit and natural kindness of disposition, which led him continually to contribute to the comfort of those about him at the expense of his own, had injured his health, long previous to the action in which he received his

wounds. Though not dangerous, they were numerous; and the very hot weather that succeeded, retarded his recovery.

He was weary of his weakness, and felt a sickly impatience to be with Lord Amesfort. He assured Adolphus he wanted nothing to cure him but the presence of his friends, and that his arrival had doubled his strength. Montresor shook his head, and the next day confirmed his fears. The emotion of the meeting had been most prejudicial to the invalid; he had passed a feverish night, and was peremptorily ordered not to think of moving for some weeks. Adolphus set forth in search of quieter lodgings than the inn he had first gone to; and, having succeeded in moving Lord De Calmer without fatigue to those he had selected, prepared to write to Lord Amesfort. He had hardly taken up his pen, when a carriage drove to the door, and the Earl himself sprung from it. Adolphus hastened to meet him; and, after answering the anxious enquiries of his guardian, hinted at the propriety of sparing

Lord De Calmer an interview for the present, till his exhausted strength was somewhat restored.

The Earl had been sufficiently alarmed before ;—now, the caution of Montresor, and, above all, the melancholy of his countenance, inspired him with the most gloomy apprehensions. His head drooped on his hand, and tears unrepressed, because unmarked, silently and slowly fell over a face furrowed by many a care. Affected by his grief, Montresor's heart warmed towards his guardian : he forgot whose husband he was, and saw only the affectionate uncle of his friend. Lord Amesfort did not seem disposed to repel the sympathy that was offered him. " See," said he, after a long sad silence, " how ungrateful we are ! Providence must take back the blessings vouchsafed us, ere we acknowledge their value. It is the spirit of discontent and impatience that prompts the assertion, ' we have nothing left to care for.' My punishment is just,—it has taught me how dearly I loved the son of my poor Frances."

" De Calmer is very young," returned Adol-

phus, in a tone that imitated but ill the accent of hope; "and when his strength will permit him to see you, his recovery, no doubt, will be accelerated by proofs of a regard he never doubted, but which it is always gratifying to see displayed.

The Earl heard him not; but seizing the pen Montresor had been on the point of using to write to him, he scratched a few hasty lines; then, overturning, without much ceremony, De Calmer's desk in search of some sealing-wax, rang the bell to send off his letter. As he replaced the things more leisurely, a small miniature fell on the ground. The case opened with the fall, and Adolphus exclaimed, as he picked it up, "My sister!"

"Is it like her?" asked Lord Amesfort, in a tone of interest, which surprised his auditor, who replied, "It is like, as pictures usually are, for strangers: it is very unsatisfactory to me, and probably yet more so to De Calmer."

The Earl continued to gaze upon it: he held it in various lights, as if he sought a likeness that escaped him; then looking up suddenly, he

said, "So, then, my nephew loves your sister? Are they engaged?"

"I believe, not exactly," said Montresor, embarrassed, in spite of himself, at the steadfast, stern look of his guardian.

"Then, young man," said Lord Amesfort, striking his hand forcibly on the table, "give me leave to say, you ought to know exactly. I have no claim on your confidence; say or withhold from me, but be not yourself doubtful,—you, who hold for your young sisters the place of a father."

"I do not doubt my sister's prudence, or my friend's honour," mildly answered Adolphus.

"Words, words!" cried the Earl, with increasing vehemence; he stopped, then turning his dark eye, full of powerful contemptuous meaning, on Montresor, he coldly asked, "Is it quite wise, quite equitable, to expect from others the self-command we have not ourselves?"

Adolphus shuddered as the light flashed through the inmost and guilty recesses of his soul; anger inspired him with transient courage to meet the look he dreaded; and the fea-

tures that so lately wore the expression of grief and mildness, now blazed with wrath, bordering on hatred. He would have spoken, but an air of wildness spread itself over the Earl's countenance; and Adolphus felt unable to resist the gesture between despair and authority, which checked his words. A sullen silence ensued, which would have continued unbroken, but for a summons from De Calmer for his friend. Montresor went, and his irritable feelings gave way before the heartfelt satisfaction which De Calmer's improved appearance excited. He communicated his new-born hopes to his guardian, but they seemed powerless to chase the gloom from his brow. The tone of deep sadness with which the Earl thanked him, smote the kind heart of his ward: he stood irresolute what to say, yet longing to say something. Lord Amesfort, who appeared to know by intuition every turn in his feelings, motioned him to take a chair beside him, and kindly attempted a few words of congratulation; but they died on his lips, and again he relapsed into silence.

Lord Amesfort broke it abruptly. "Adol-

phus," he began, "it grieves me to give you pain; and yet, if you are unprepared, the blow will be heavier. I do not think, if our dear Henry recovers, he will marry your sister."

"I think he will, my Lord, unless—"

"Unless I prevent it: I understand you, and certainly I might fairly say I shall not prevent it. Nay, I wish it—more, far more, than you can. You look incredulous; but you do not know me; and it is not the least of my sorrows, that you never will." The Earl paused, and turned away his face; but unconsciously he pressed Montresor's hand, who, touched at the unwonted tenderness of his manner, bent his head to meet the hand that had caressed him. He almost started, as he felt a tear fall on his forehead. A new and indescribable emotion seized him: for a moment he longed to throw himself at his guardian's feet and be folded to his heart; he smiled at his own ardent imagination, and sighed as he threw himself back in his chair.

"Why should I deceive you," resumed Lord Amesfort, in a broken voice; "I must

not think of what I wish. It is my duty to speak to Henry, nor will I conceal from you, that the result of our conversation will probably be inimical to your wishes."

"I had nothing but your opposition to dread," anxiously remarked Adolphus; "and if you do *not* object, I do not see what is to prevent De Calmer and Emily from being happy their own way. They will not be rich; but riches are not happiness."

"It is not money," murmured the Earl.

"What then is it, my Lord? My sister's appearance and education fit her for any situation; and though I do not pretend to be a genealogist, or to know much about my family, yet the honour my mother has of being related to your Lordship, satisfies me on that head, and might satisfy De Calmer."

"It is possible, however, that it may not: but we will not anticipate evils.—Poor girl!" Lord Amesfort continued; "she is very young, too young, I would fain hope, to love for ever."

"Ah, my Lord!" resumed Montresor, in an imploring accent, "is it not just then we do

love? If you knew my dear Emily, you would not wonder—"

"That Henry should love her," interrupted Lord Amesfort, "I am not wondering: nay, I should have rejoiced, if he had not been, as it were, left to my charge; and if I did not think myself answerable, in some degree, for his conduct. In giving him my reasons against the match, I shall not conceal my wish to see it take place: but do not flatter yourself; if I know him, he will be little influenced by it. Now, my dear Adolphus, go to De Calmer, and when you have seen his physician, you can determine whether I shall wait a day or two, in the hope of his being well enough to see me, or return at once, and give up the point till he is strong enough to travel."

Montresor obeyed in silence, wondering what the secret reasons could be that were to determine his sister's fate, yet unable to feel depressed, now the only bar he could see to her happiness, in the disapprobation of his guardian, was removed. De Calmer was allowed to see his uncle on the following day; and during a fort-

night that Montresor and Lord Amesfort assiduously watched by his couch, the rapidity of his recovery seemed to verify his own assertion, that he wanted nothing to cure him but the presence of those he loved. His weakness put an almost continual restraint on conversation; yet did Adolphus and his guardian feel to know each other better in that short space of time than they had ever done before. Lord Amesfort seemed disposed to lay aside his haughtiness; but his melancholy had taken too strong hold of him to be shaken off. Montresor was often affected by an unexpected look, or tone of tenderness in the Earl; and then marvelled to see him return to his cold, stern manner, as if he repented having betrayed a regard he wished to conceal.

This was very incomprehensible; yet were his own feelings towards his guardian to the full as much so: he felt to nourish within him, at once, the two distinct impulses of love and sympathy, of dread and dislike: as these instincts predominated, he shrunk from Lord Amesfort, or sought him out, wondering, at the

same time, at the keenness, no less than the inconsistency, of his own emotions. "There is, surely," thought he, "a hidden charm about this man, at once to attract and repel."—Then he would think of Lady Amesfort, and wonder how she could live with so singular a being, without love or hatred: yet he well knew she felt neither: to be utterly indifferent about him; to forget his very existence, as she did, was marvellous,—Adolphus thought, impossible. Then would the native generosity of his temper urge him to fathom the character, the inexplicable character, of his guardian, in the hope of leading him to win a heart which he had hitherto neglected. "If she knew him, she would surely love him; and she, at least, would be happy." Such would sometimes be the conclusion of his reveries, from which he would start with horror, as if he were guilty of treachery towards her he loved, in wishing, for one moment, to appropriate her heart to another, when he so deeply felt it to be his.

As soon as De Calmer was pronounced equal

to the fatigue of a journey, Lord Amesfort was eager to take him home; and Montresor, sighing, as he felt himself excluded from that home, prepared to visit his mother, and to hold out to Emily the soothing prospect of soon seeing his friend. De Calmer's evident impatience to be well, and at liberty to roam whither he would, was often accounted for by allusions to Wales; and Montresor left him, proud of the stability of an affection, the decay of which he had expected, and fondly hoping that nothing would arise to impede a union likely to produce so much happiness. With the renewal of this sanguine spirit he inhaled the pure air with delight, and drew a long breath at finding himself escaped from a sick-room, and the still more oppressive sadness of his guardian. Yet his spirits sunk, as the chimneys of his mother's house rose through the trees to his view. "Alas!" thought he, "if the melancholy of Lord Amesfort overpowered me in a few weeks, how can my poor sister sustain the more constant weight of my mother's despondency?

How strange, that two people so highly gifted, so formed to be beloved, should be the prey of a grief that seems to know no end !"

The stopping of the carriage checked his further soliloquy. He thought his mother less feeble than usual; but he would have been shocked at the change visible in Emily, had he not supposed he possessed a cordial to revive her decaying bloom. She was indeed cherished by her brother's presence, and was eager to remark to Mrs. Montresor, how much better he seemed, than when last they met. She flattered herself all was again well, and that her admired Adolphus had returned to his former self, and would be guarded by past experience from similar wanderings. Montresor saw himself rise in his sister's opinion, and sighed to think how little he deserved to do so.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ADOLPHUS continued to linger in Wales, fondly hoping every day might bring De Calmer, of whose entire convalescence he had received frequent assurances. Time passed on, and still he came not. Lord Amesfort's words recurred to his mind, and, for the first time, a fear arose of their having had more meaning than he wished to lend to them. Immediately he determined on returning to town, and finding out De Calmer's present plans and feelings. He spoke cheerfully to Emily at parting, for he thought it would be time enough to communicate his anxiety when there was proof of its being well-founded. He rejoiced to leave her well and cheerful. He did not know that her tears were restrained from falling, only until he

could not see them; and that the smile with which she now habitually dressed her features, vanished with the effort that produced it.

Lord De Calmer was in the country with the Amesforts; but Adolphus heard from Isabella Albany (who was in town), that he was not so strong as he had believed himself, and that he had been recommended to try a better climate. He ceased to write; but this was easily accounted for, Adolphus thought; whilst in Wales, letters might be read by Emily, as well as her brother; but, now that Montresor was alone, there was nothing surprising in his friend failing in correspondence, and he simply concluded that he had nothing to say. Yet when this silence continued unbroken, he began to feel uncomfortable, and to dread he knew not what. He wrote to Emily, exaggerating De Calmer's weakness, though careful not to excite any needless apprehensions; but each time that he thus felt called upon to account for De Calmer's absence, it became more irksome and strange to him.

One evening that he was walking home later

than usual, an unexpected shower induced him to think of shelter; he remembered a commission his sister had given him respecting some books, and made the best of his way to a bookseller's shop. They were shutting it up, and sending off the parcels bespoken during the day. One of them was pushed by the clerk towards that part of the counter where Adolphus stood, and mechanically he glanced his eye across the direction. He almost started.

"Is that gentleman in town?" he asked of the person who had just directed it.

"Yes, Sir, he is;—was in the book-room this morning.—Here, James, take this parcel; be very particular about it—don't forget the bill."

Montresor took out his list, and leaving it with the man nearest him, left the shop immediately. The rain had rather increased since first he had thought of avoiding it, but he did not perceive it. He kept the lad in view who carried the parcel, unable to arrange his ideas sufficiently to guide himself to the place of his destination. The young messenger had many other places to call at, and as he took those that

lay at all in his way, before they reached Bedford-square, Adolphus was completely drenched. He leaned against the railway of a fine house, as the lad went down the area, and asked himself if it were possible De Calmer could live in so large a house, and in a situation so remote from all his haunts and acquaintances.

"I cannot go in now, but I can ask who lives here;"—and having come to this apparently simple determination, after much reflection, he knocked at the door, almost starting at the noise he made, as if he had expected De Calmer himself would open it to him. It was opened, at last, and Montresor felt relieved at not knowing the man's face. It was not De Calmer's servant, nor Lord Amesfort's; and he must have read the direction ill. In vain the man assured him Lord De Calmer lived there; he continued to put other questions to him, from a doubt of the fact. He was doomed to be convinced, for his friend was coming down to dinner; and, hearing his voice, could not resist the impulse of the moment, and sprung forward to meet him, though he had so often systematically

avoided him since his return to town. The warmth of De Calmer's manner, his cordial greeting, his kind voice, every tone of which had power over the heart of Montresor, convinced him, against the evidence of his senses, that all was right,—that all would be explained. He yielded to his earnest entreaty of remaining with him, and followed the servant to Lord De Calmer's apartment.

Whilst he furnished him with dry clothes, the man, who had been long in the family, and had a regard for Montresor as his master's friend, expressed his satisfaction at seeing him again. "If you had been with us, Sir," pursued the valet, "I cannot help thinking matters would have turned out better. My Lord is always quieter when you are with him; and, weak as he is still, he should be kept calm; instead of which, the old Lord and he had such talkings and closetings; and my master, he would run out of the house like one possessed; and when I 'd go and seek him, a thousand to one if he was not lying on the damp grass, or some such bad place for a sick man. And the

poor Countess, she would take on sadly, and cry when she thought herself alone, all for want of Miss Albany to comfort her."

The man paused to be questioned; but Adolphus could not have uttered, had he wished it; and the servant, pitying his agitation, continued: "Now, Sir, I would not have you to think my Lord quarrelled with his uncle. No, indeed; they seemed very good friends at parting—only something was wrong, I could see clearly."

"Many things are wrong in this world, my good Mark," said Montresor with effort, as he took his watch out of the servant's hand: but it mends nothing to talk about it; so, do not say so to any one else."

"No, Sir, certainly, Sir." And the man hesitated; but seeing Montresor on the point of leaving the room, he laid his hand on the handle of the door, and said in a low voice, "I think, Sir, you ought to know, that Mr. Knolls —this house belongs to Mr. Knolls, Sir—that he means to get my master for his sister."

"I suppose," replied Montresor, trying to smile, "Lord De Calmer will not be *got* by any

body, but will choose whom he pleases. He is his own master."

"Very true, Sir, so one may say; and yet I have seen people, as much their own master, do things in the marrying way they never much intended to do."

"But we cannot help that, Mark."

"*I* cannot, Sir; but my Lord loves you; and, to my fancy, he don't care for Mr. Knolls, though he is so much with him, and they drink so much wine together. He is a gay man, they tell me; and only wants to marry off his sister, that he may bring home his mistress, and live comfortably with her. Mrs. Moore is a widow, and a poor one; and being his only sister, he can't so well turn her out of his house till she has another to go to. You will see her at dinner, Sir: and pray don't admire her *sweet smile*, like my poor master; for she has a devil of a tongue of her own, as he'll find if he should marry her." And having finished his warning, and received an assenting smile from Montresor, he suffered him to depart, and ushered him into a splendid dining-room, in which about a dozen

people were seated. He was introduced to Mr. Knolls and his sister; and the extreme graciousness of the latter brought the servant's caution to his mind. Mrs. Moore was a fine woman, who had been younger, but had probably never looked better, dressed more fashionably, or rouged with greater skill. She talked and laughed more than Montresor liked; but not, it would have seemed, more than Lord De Calmer liked, who sat next her, and paid her a degree of attention that surprised his friend.

Adolphus was slightly acquainted with one or two men of the party, which prevented his feeling as awkward from the entire neglect of De Calmer as he might otherwise have done: yet still he wondered; and when the ladies retired, he wondered still more. The party was then so small, that, having drawn their chairs round the fire, something like conversation was possible. De Calmer did not seem to think so; for he hardly spoke, and did not even look at his friend when he pushed the bottle to him. Adolphus trembled as he saw the carmine spot on De Calmer's cheek deepen and spread, and

his hand grow tremulous as he raised the oft-replenished glass to his lips. He would have taken him out, but he heard the rain still patter against the windows; and there was no house near, to which there could be any reason for going. He did not like to propose joining the ladies; for he had no chance of speaking to him there, more than at dinner. It was evident, however, that he could not remain much longer where he was, without being completely intoxicated.

Taking advantage, therefore, of a move, from the departure of one of the party, he summoned De Calmer to follow him. The young Peer hesitated. Besides his embarrassment at being alone with Adolphus, he had just taken enough wine to wish for more, and to have resented any one disturbing him—if he could have resented any thing from Adolphus. The master of the house was urgent to detain them; but, without heeding his remonstrances, Montresor repeated his request, in that friendly tone of authoritativeness, so few people thought fit to resist. His friend did not, but instantly arose, and

took the arm held out to him. As they ascended a broad handsome staircase, Montresor asked when he could see De Calmer, and how long he thought of staying in town. His vague, hurried answers appeared to Montresor to be the effect of the wine he had taken, and he earnestly remonstrated with him on so injudicious a practice in the reduced state he had so lately been in. "You want me to nurse you again, I believe," he continued, smiling affectionately as he pressed his burning hand in his; and De Calmer, overcome by his kindness, hid his face on his shoulder, vehemently exclaiming, "My dearest friend! how unworthy I am!—how ungrateful you must think me!" Then, opening the drawing-room door, he himself escaped down a dark passage, leaving his friend in the full blaze of a lustre. Adolphus was obliged to go in, though he longed to pursue him, and learn the meaning of his disjointed phrases. He watched every one who entered during an evening that appeared to him endless; but it was neither De Calmer nor any message from him.

In his state of anxious suspense, few things could be more intolerable than the lively rattle of the gay widow, who had seldom taken more pains to amuse, and had certainly never failed so entirely. Tired at last of his forced attention and absent replies, she left him to himself. A few people arrived, all strangers to Adolphus, who sat down to cards or music, without appearing to wonder that he neither joined in the one, nor listened to the other. It grew late, and, convinced that De Calmer would not return, Montresor took leave of Mrs. Moore, and went to the room in which he had dressed on his arrival. It was empty, but his clothes were laid out by the careful Mark. As they were thoroughly dry, Adolphus would have put them on; but a scarcely acknowledged feeling, that they might be the means of his hearing sooner of Lord De Calmer than seemed otherwise likely, restrained him. He wrote three words in pencil, which he left on his friend's desk,—merely to say where he was, and at what hours he was always at home. He was sure of this reaching De Calmer, from the vigilance of

Mark; and so thoroughly miserable did Adolphus at that moment feel, that he could have wept at the thought, how much more secure he was of being remembered and sought out by the servant, than by his master.

He went home, and for six days he waited in the same room, almost in the same spot, looking with apparent calmness for the expected visit. The seventh day closed upon him in bitterness, for no one came. Pride might have steeled his heart, had it been only for himself; but he thought of his sister, and relented. "Yes, for *your sake*," murmured he, "only for yours, my Emily," as he sallied forth for Bedford Square.

"Is Lord De Calmer at home?"

"Not at home."

"When do you expect him?"

"I could not say indeed, Sir;—he has been out of town some days."

"Some days!" Adolphus involuntarily returned his card to his pocket, but the servant had seen it.

"There is a letter for you, Sir, and a parcel;

but my master forgot where Lord De Calmer desired them to be sent."

Adolphus breathed again. "Give me the letter," were his first words, holding out the card by which to send the parcel. He waited an age for the letter, and began to think it must be lost, when the servant very leisurely appeared with it in his hand. Montresor walked rapidly away, quite forgetting to attend to his road in his eagerness to devour the contents of this letter, in which, however, he in vain sought an elucidation of his friend's conduct. It ran thus:—

"MY DEAREST ADOLPHUS,

"It seems to me that nothing I can say for myself, can be the shadow of an excuse. Besides, you know, I do not love to say what is not, and surely to you, my own friend, I would not breathe a thought that did not rise from my heart. I am doing every thing you would not wish me to do; and yet, I must go on. Every hour in the day I long to be with you; and yet, if I came, we should not be happy.

Do you think there is such a word, or that it has any meaning? My uncle says not, and I am disposed to be of his way of thinking. I have followed your advice, and given up wine and my drinking friends.—Friends! You and I, Montresor, were not used so to misname people! You will hear I am going to marry Mrs. Moore. I think I shall not. I say I think, because I have learnt to speak with caution of my own actions, for I have certainly no present intention of putting on the shackles in favour of maid or widow. I am going into Scotland with my uncle—at least, I believe I am, if I do not change my mind. I saw your friend Isabella Albany lately. I wish I could make a tour of the Continent with her; I think she would cure me of all my follies, and frailties, and prejudices:—how little, if that were to take place, would then remain of your friend! I can't fancy how I should feel—very unlike what I do now, assuredly, though hardly more entirely

Yours,

DE CALMER."

In vain did Montresor read over this hasty scrawl, and put it by to reflect on what it might mean: it still remained a riddle, which he had not the means of solving. He could not indeed blind himself to the cruel fact, that his sister was deserted. In all his prospects, in all his feelings, that one little sunny spot alone remained; and now thick gloom had overtaken that too, and all was alike blank and cheerless. Montresor entered his solitary lodging, and as he spread De Calmer's letter on the table before him, and gazed on it without again attempting to read it, a feeling so desolate and forlorn crept over him, that he could almost fancy his pulses stood still, and his stagnant blood refused to flow.

"Is it not my own fault," at last he cried aloud; "have I not persisted in loving the unloveable beings that surround me? Why could I not do like others, and love and hate by rule; caring for people while it was prudent, or might be useful? In the desert of life I mocked the barrenness that I beheld, and poured out my soul on the wide waste, vainly thinking I should

animate it! My feelings have been spread out before the fierce rays of the sun, and the piercing storms of heaven. I have neither guarded nor repressed them; and they return to crush me. And is it thus our hearts must always wither within us? Must we outlive ourselves, and become a moving grove? And is this the life we struggle to defend,—we wish to others as a kindness? Isabella! Is your cold creed Wisdom? If so, then what a dreamer have I been!"

Adolphus let his head fall on the table, and gave way to that nameless reverie, which is not thought, which is not suffering, and yet which partakes of both. She, whose gentleness might have soothed, whose strength might have supported him, was, alas! far distant. Isabella had left Lady Amesfort, to be with her mother by the sea-side, whither her delicate health frequently carried her. Lord De Calmer was still in town. Once, at the Opera, Adolphus saw him. He knew too that he was seen, and veiled his eyes to spare himself another meeting. Montresor, who often felt his mind palsied when

alone, started into life and energy as he caught a glance of his friend. He bent forward to gaze on him; and when convinced he would not see him, he abruptly quitted the house. De Calmer had followed him with his eye,—he arose involuntarily. Montresor looked back; and the look smote the heart of his friend, who rushed out of the box to join him. He paused to reflect in the corridor; he saw the towering form which he had come to seek, darkening the turn in the passage, and, shrinking back, he drew his hat over his face. Montresor walked steadily on; he did not look to the right or the left; and De Calmer flattered himself he had not been seen. He was mistaken: the eye and heart of Montresor had drunk the poison to the very dregs. He had actually seen De Calmer recoil from him; his mind yet hesitated to take in the dreadful conviction; and while the smile of delirium dwelt on his lips, he repeated to himself—"Oh, it is impossible! I know it is impossible!"

A few days brought him a letter from Emily. It had been a severe task to break to her that

De Calmer spoke of marriage with another as a possible event. Not that Montresor ever believed he would marry either Mrs. Moore or any one else, but it was the only way in which he could hint that she was forgotten, or, at least, given up. He painted to himself all Emily would think and write; and when at last he got her answer, its calmness was almost a shock to him, so violent was the surprise. He began to flatter himself she had never cared for his altered friend; but when with this new idea he studied her words, he felt how she had weighed them, and he admired the self-control she had always exercised in alluding to her faithless lover. One only phrase betrayed the interest she felt in the topic;—it was a request that he would not again name De Calmer; but it was said with such apparent simplicity, and seemed so well accounted for by her in a general way, that it had peculiar meaning only to those who looked for it.

He was still applauding the proper pride with which she veiled her feelings, when Mark came to inform him he was to accompany his

master and Lord Amesfort to Scotland on the following day. Adolphus gave him a note for Lord De Calmer, desiring him not to deliver it till they had left town. He knew how much his friend was the slave of impulse. He might, perhaps, seek him out on the first receipt of the letter, and avoid him again. Feeling himself unequal to stand these perpetual tergiversations, Adolphus determined that when again they met it should be the unbiassed act of his friend. He should owe the action to no foreign impulse, but both to his affection and his judgment. Adolphus tried to avoid the shadow of reproach, yet did every word convey one to the sensitive breast of De Calmer. He wrote thus :—

" Your servant called to see me before his journey, and by him, therefore, I send a hasty answer to your last. I know nothing of Mrs. Moore ; but if you like her, why should you not marry her ? Who seeks to control you, and to whom are you accountable ? Because I thought you too young to marry before you went

abroad, do you suppose I mean to object to it always? I am quite relieved by your promise to give your health fair play. I should suppose, indeed, on your travels your temptation to drink would not be great. I have some thoughts of going abroad, if I can prevail on my mother to part with me. She is better than usual, so that I have a faint hope of succeeding.

Truly yours,

A. M."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE Earl of Amesfort was visiting, for the second time in his life, property he possessed, of considerable value, towards the northern extremity of the Island, and which, but for the hope of dissipating his nephew, by a view of home-scenery at least as magnificent as the young Briton surmounts so many obstacles to behold on the Continent, he would probably never have seen again. The Border country is in all directions bleak and bare; and as Lord De Calmer could not find any interest in his road, Lord Amesfort roused him by relating the very different views and feelings with which he had twenty years before travelled in the same direction. As he dwelt on sorrows which no time could weaken, and faults which no repent-

ance could expiate, the sufferings of his nephew faded away, or seemed light indeed by comparison. Then came objects of curiosity, ancient legends, and family traditions, to claim a share of interest from the youthful traveller, and wean him successfully from home.

When his uncle saw his versatile mind already take another direction, he ceased to speak of himself, and returned to his usual habits of taciturnity and apparent indifference, leaving the young man to follow the new bent he had given him. Shrinking, as De Calmer always did, from all painful associations, it is not wonderful that he did not write to Montresor. He meant it, indeed; but the thing was irksome, and therefore deferred; so that the time for execution never came. Meanwhile Adolphus, ignorant, at four hundred miles distance, of these good resolutions and fluctuations, lived between hope and fear for some weeks. He tried to think of something else; he tried to reason himself into more moderation and patience; but the doctrine was new to him, and most adverse to his nature, and he made but

little proficiency in it. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick;" and the sickness was now strong on Montresor. All earthly things have their limits. A proud, cold resentment took place of the wounded feelings of disappointed friendship, and with the determination of learning to care for nothing, he went through the common routine of life; while men shrunk from his stern unsocial manner, and could not guess how full of the milk of human kindness was the heart he hid from them.

His German friend was in town, and did not relax in his attentions. Adolphus was much there. The house of young new-married people is generally pleasant, and the Barclays were a cheerful family: there was much mirth and some happiness among them. They all liked Adolphus; he felt at his ease with them, danced and sung with the young people, was ready to make up Sir John's rubber, and feeling he had done all that was expected in society, he often congratulated himself on having learnt the art of intimacy without affection. He was calling one day on Gustavus,

and left his card on being denied admittance: he had not, however, got to the end of the street, when the servant came after him, and he found Eleanor in great distress. Her baby, a few months old, was ill, and the young mother thought she could not have too much advice for it. She had heard him mention a physician of some eminence, as peculiarly skilful in the diseases of infants, and she sent after him accordingly to learn further particulars. Adolphus entirely won her heart, by offering to go instantly for the person he had mentioned; and having been fortunate enough to find him at home, he returned with him in less than half an hour. Whether the child's illness had been serious from the beginning, or was rendered so by the variety of remedies with which it was tormented, Dr. L. did not say; but he shook his head, and the awful sign did not prognosticate evil in vain, for the next day the baby died.

The despair of the mother knew no bounds; and when Montresor called to ask about her shortly after, Gustavus took him in silence to the

bedside, where a raging fever confined Eleanor, and pointed to the insensible form of his late blooming wife with so touching an expression of grief, that Montresor's heart was melted, and he determined to devote his time to this house of sickness and sorrow, and at least prevail on Gustavus not to ruin his own health by perpetual watchings. The unfortunate mother was soon declared out of danger. Miss Barclay had come to nurse her; and Montresor quitted the house, when he could no longer be useful, without once asking if the fever was infectious, nor, though feeling ill for some days after, did he ascribe it to any thing but fatigue. He grew worse however, and confined himself to his room, and then to his bed, but resisted the entreaty of his servant to send for medical assistance, from the internal conviction, that his disorder was the effect of vexation, which his youth and natural strength would effectually subdue in time.

The mind may be quelled, but unfortunately the body is not quite under our sub-

jection: Adolphus was soon incapable either of acting or directing. When first he woke to consciousness, after this severe attack, his head was giddy, and his frame weak. He closed his eyes from the light that pained them. A female figure shaded the candle with her hand, as she bent over him: he felt anxious to know who was thus interested for him—he thought of his mother, of Emily, but they were far away. He looked again. Could it be? his heart beat fast, and his head swam yet more. His sight was confused, and he sighed, as he thought how his imagination could deceive him. Some one felt his pulse: it was a large rough hand, and the ticking of a watch assured him who was near: he listened to the low murmur that followed, but could not distinguish what was said. He thought a tear fell on his hand; it was wiped off by a very soft handkerchief. He moved his head with difficulty— the light gleamed full on a tearful face indeed, but one that beamed with hope—and it was the face of Lady Amesfort! He closed his eyes, to keep

the fair vision in his mind,—for how could it be real? He lay quiet from weakness, but he could not sleep. Shortly after, he heard something poured into a glass, and some one say in a whisper, it was the hour to give it him. He was raised gently, he did not see by whom, and the glass touched his lips. He did not feel disposed to swallow the medicine, and turned away his head.

"He is not sensible yet," said a low voice near him.

"Yes he is," replied another, that made him start. The speaker, who supported him in her arms, bent her head towards him, and asked him to drink. Had it been poison, he would not have refused it—for now he was sure it was no vision,—'twas she whom he loved that stood by him—it was her tear which had fallen upon her hand—her voice that fell like balm upon his heart. From that hour he recovered rapidly, and was soon moved into his guardian's house, which was more spacious and airy for an invalid. He

was exhausted by the removal, but his weakness spared him much agitation. He was not in a state to reflect—to remember he had been tacitly banished from that house, and that, in Lord Amesfort's absence, it was the last in which he should set his foot. He felt only that he was at the guidance of the Countess; it was pleasing to be led by her, and he was content to be taken whither she wished.

His entire recovery was slow; but he did not think it tedious, for Lady Amesfort was his constant companion, his indefatigable nurse. In the continually renewing consciousness of her attachment, he felt a luxury in existence, that had hitherto been denied him: he thought not of her husband; he scarcely thought of his own beloved mother and sisters. His home, his heart was with her, and he forgot every thing but her. In the bliss of exclusive devoted affection, he seemed to gain a new being: his whole soul, subdued, inundated with tenderness, was lost to every other sensation. What indeed was there to rouse him, since she who

inspired the infatuation, so fully shared it? With returning strength, however, some of the trance gave way,—the enchantment was dissolved; and though he loved as deeply, it was no longer so happily. Miss Albany returned to town, and the spell broke at once.

Isabella rarely condemned her friends, but her vigorous mind instantly turned to the means of repairing what could not be undone. Her first idea was to take Lady Amesfort away, leaving Adolphus in possession of the house, and writing the Earl as plain and simple a statement of the fact as possible. But she could not now mould the ductile mind of her friend as wax in her hand. She wept, but she would not yield. Isabella then turned to Montresor, and implored him not to reward the generous cares of the Countess by blasting her character, and destroying her husband's confidence in her. Adolphus listened in gloomy silence: he knew she was right; but the time was past when he would have tried to do what was right, cost what it would. He awaited his fiat

from the lips of one against whose boundless empire he had ceased to struggle. Her downcast eyes, her pale cheek, told the tale of weakness and irresolution.

"Isabella thinks," he said calmly to her, "that our dream has lasted too long. She wishes me to go. Have you courage to await your Lord's return?"

"Nay, spare me, my own Adolphus: you know I am unable to decide any thing."

"Could you be happy far away?—far from home, from friends, from your native land, from all sacred ties? Could you part with this dear boy, nor regret the wealth, the honours you abandon? Say so, my beloved, and none shall interrupt our felicity: our life would be too short for our love. We *must* part *now*, or *never*."

"We cannot part *now*."

"Then never shall we, my own only treasure."

Lady Amesfort struggled to free herself from his embrace, feebly exclaiming, "No, no,

Montresor; I am not so far lost yet! For myself, indeed, I have nothing to regret:—a melancholy fate; an unloving husband, who would scarce discover my absence; rank that fatigues me, by keeping me ever in representation with people I do not love, and who love not me; a cold unpitying world, whose scorn I could despise as I do its favour. I have on earth but one tie, one feeling; but it is not so with you. I know you, Adolphus—time might deprive me of every vestige of beauty; age might bow me down; nay, if it were possible, even love might expire within us—but *you* would not abandon me. For my sake, you would become an alien to your home; and your friends, your talents, your energies, would lie dormant in a retirement we could not dare to call honourable:—and this would be *my* doing! Adolphus, I could not bear it—the very thought would kill me."

"And do you then think," he cried warmly, "I leave behind any thing half so dear as you? I should make no sacrifice. I am weary of my

life, except as your love gives it value. I have sought pleasure in study, but that has ceased to interest me; I have pursued it in dissipation, yet it fled me ever: I placed it in friendship, and my friend is false. Love alone has never betrayed, never disappointed me!—it made me suffer, for I thought it unattainable; it has ceased to be so, and I am blest."

"But not happy," replied the Countess, bursting into tears; "Oh no, you would not be happy! I could rejoice in the very shame that pursued me, since it would link you more closely to me: I could not blush at a disgrace that cast me on the mercy of my lover: I should not feel humbled by any thing that proved my devotion to him, for whose sake all things would be sweet. You would be at once the excuse and the reward of my guilt, and I could almost glory in it! But you would not feel as I should. You would not triumph in your conquest, but mourn over it. When the censorious scoffed me,—when the virtuous passed me by, you would writhe in agony. You would see

that all your devotion failed to raise me in the eyes of others, and you would forget that it was every thing in mine."

For a moment, Adolphus could not speak—he could only kiss off the tears that deluged the pale cheek of the speaker. Her words had pierced like daggers to his heart, and carried instant conviction of their truth. From that moment he felt he could not be happy; but *she* might at least. He had torn her from every duty; he had destroyed for her every comfort; and could he desert her? Could he cast her from him back into the wilderness he had made for her? Could he abandon her, while his presence could soothe,—his love bless her? Impossible! Montresor did not recede, but the icy fang of remorse fastened on his heart; and whilst he tried to comfort the weeping Countess, he could scarce forbear exclaiming aloud, "It is the beginning of a long life of punishment."

At last, after a silence which seemed as though it would never be broken, he said firmly, "We have decided;—let us then quit Lord

Amesfort's house as soon as we can, and arrange our departure speedily, or his return may frustrate our measures.—These baubles," he added, smiling sadly, as he unclasped a bracelet of value, "you will leave behind,—you do not require them to make you lovely or beloved; and you will soon be a poor man's wife."

"But he will not be poorer on my account," she answered hastily, while a ray of pleasure struggled to find place on her harassed countenance. "You know, I was an heiress, and am independent still. Why do you look so miserable? Is your pride hurt? Oh, Adolphus, you do not love as I do!"

Adolphus did love as passionately, as generously as she did; but he was younger than she was: in the eyes of the world,—the selfish, calculating world,—he should seem to gain by her dishonour! Was guilt, then, become a traffic to him? The thought was torture—and yet it must be borne, and borne *alone;* for how could she sympathize with him, or enter into a feeling so purely selfish,—a feeling that owed

its bitterness to the opinion of others; which opinion she had set at defiance, though he could not. Lady Amesfort had given up receiving visits from the moment she first knew of Adolphus's illness and danger; but Miss Albany had always had free admittance, and she appeared now to the embarrassment and surprise of those whom she visited. She embraced Lady Amesfort as usual, but without noticing Montresor; she asked after the child; and then, as gently as she could, announced the expected arrival of the Earl, as to take place in a day or two. Consternation was very visible on the faces of Montresor and Lady Amesfort; for they had not looked for him so soon, and they said so.

"I know you did not," replied Isabella coldly; "but I wrote to him the last day I called here, and found how necessary his presence was."

Lady Amesfort, between alarm and indignation, could not find words to express herself; but Montresor haughtily exclaimed, "And

by what right, Miss Albany, did you presume to interfere in the affairs of the Countess? Was she accountable to you? and do you repay her attachment by sacrificing her to her husband's resentment?"

"I did not speak to you," replied Isabella, with a swift glance of contempt; then turning to the Countess, she implored her, by every argument she could think of, to suffer herself to be saved. She spoke low and steadily, but not without feeling. Once Lady Amesfort seemed shaken, and a sudden ray of hope arose in the breast of her friend. The child entered at this moment. Isabella sprung forward, and taking its little hands, which she put up in the attitude of supplication, she knelt beside him, with difficulty articulating, "Implore your mother not to abandon you;—not to disgrace herself, for your sake."

Alarmed at an energy so unusual in the sober Miss Albany,—shocked at the misery that seemed to surround him, the boy clung to his mother, and wept in silence.

"My child," cried his almost convulsed parent, "it is I who implore you—do not forget me: when others blame me, remember how dearly I loved you,—that my flight did not injure you—that I shall think of you, and pray for you, though I may never see you more."

The boy ceased to weep: he looked up and said steadily—"I will not leave you; take me with you."

"Alas! I cannot—I dare not," cried the frantic Countess.—"Isabella! what have I done to you, that you should torture me thus?"

"If you suffer so bitterly already," replied Isabella, "what will you do hereafter? One more effort, and you burst the bands of sin for ever; it is not yet too late."

"It is too late!" cried the Countess, in the accent of desperation, and rushed out of the room. Isabella leaned for a moment against the chimneypiece, and when she uncovered her face to ring the bell for her carriage, even Montresor, angry as he was, could not help pitying her. He felt that she would come no

more,—that he should never see her again; and he longed to recommend his sister to her care, but he had not courage to address her. He remembered at this moment what she had said in the beginning of their acquaintance, "If Lord De Calmer does not marry Emily now, he is not likely to do so hereafter;" and he felt a vague hope that she might yet bring about the marriage.

"Isabella," he said solemnly, "by our former friendship, let me beseech you to look on me now, as if I were dead: you will then condemn me less, and pity me more. I ask, however, nothing for myself,—I know I am unworthy to live in your remembrance;—but my sister. You loved Emily, and she has not forfeited your esteem; she never will. I leave her in your charge; may you manage her concerns better than I have done! This is the ast letter I received from De Calmer, and I fear—"

He paused; and Isabella, who had walked towards the door, turned round suddenly: "Lord

De Calmer," she said, without looking at him, "has taken a house and lives in strict seclusion. He has given up Emily; he has broken her heart; and even if she lives, she will not recover it. But these are trifles: the death of our friends may be borne,—it is their unworthiness which is bitter."—And, with these words of ill omen, she closed the door after her; nor had Montresor resolution enough to follow her and ask a single question. They did not, however, as she had half hoped, operate to detain him a single moment longer in England. He could return to Emily; but Lady Amesfort he must place immediately out of the reach of her husband, and he lost no time in making the necessary arrangements. The agitation and fatigue which he underwent brought on a return of his fever; but he had no time to bestow upon it, and, weak and ill as he was, he flattered himself he should sail from Portsmouth on the very day Lord Amesfort would reach London. But Isabella was as vigilant and active as himself; and about an hour before the carriage that

was to take them out of town, was ready to convey them, the Earl himself, unannounced, entered the apartment, where the last directions for the departure were giving and executing. Adolphus was writing with his back to the door, and did not look up till the Countess shrieked. He turned round, and grew pale on beholding his guardian. This, however, was not the time to shrink; and walking steadily across the room, he said, "I am sorry to be the person, my Lord, to explain all this confusion; but, whatever may be your opinion of me, I rely on your delicacy for not detaining Lady Amesfort, when she voluntarily relinquishes your name and protection."

"You are right, Sir," said the Earl, with an energy of voice and manner, of which he seemed incapable: "I shall not detain Lady Amesfort in my house; but I shall see that she does not leave it with you.—Follow me, Aurelia—nay, instantly." The Countess recoiled as her husband approached; and throwing herself into Montresor's arms, clung to him in terror.

"If you would take her from me," he cried fiercely, "you must first take my life."

Horror and anguish, amounting to madness, were depicted on the powerful features of Lord Amesfort. "Rash boy," he cried, "will nothing unfasten your guilty hold? I would have spared you," he continued, with a sudden burst of tenderness, "for you are dear to me—Heaven knows how dear!—but you will rush headlong on.—Adolphus! believe me—I speak not idle words,—guilt is an undying poison that will corrupt every pleasure."

"I believe you," said Adolphus, with desperate steadiness; "but the die is cast."

"Then hear me!" loudly exclaimed the Earl. "I do not throw the thunderbolt; it is you who bring it on your own head. It is no common infamy in which you are about to plunge. It is your father's wife you would seduce!"

Montresor reeled back; his distending eyeballs seemed ready to start out of his head; his white lips quivered, and his teeth ground against each other. He gasped for breath—

then going close up to the Earl, he said, in a tone of horrible stillness, "Monster! was it your hand that poured out the phial of wrath on the head of my mother? Did you curse me with life, that I might grow up a blacker wretch than there are words to name me? Have you set the seal of disgrace upon us, and enveloped us all, the innocent with the guilty, in one mighty ruin? Is it for this your nephew has broken the heart of your daughter? Is it for this..." Montresor could not articulate another word, but he continued to gaze on his father; and the wild fixed glare of his eye showed the chaos of an unsettling mind. The Earl felt the danger to his reason of suffering him to dwell upon these accumulated images of horror, and gently taking his hand, he pointed to Lady Amesfort. She had fainted, and lay still pale and deathlike. The effect was instantaneous on her lover. He uttered a cry so wild, so piercing, that his father shuddered, in doubt if it was not the note of madness. Adolphus flung himself on the floor beside her. He

watched the ghastly hue vanish from her face; he listened to the long labouring sigh with which she returned to the consciousness of woe; and bending over her, he said quietly, "Poor unfortunate! she lives!"

He arose, and moved towards the door. As he passed his father, he paused. Lord Amesfort half veiled his face with his hand; but his attitude denoted such hopeless overpowering anguish, that Adolphus for a moment mourned only for his father.

"There is enough of guilt and misery," he said, in a stifled voice, "but there might have been more. The world would call your wife unsullied, for it is our hearts only that have sinned."

Lord Amesfort felt that he sought to console, not to appease him; and bowing his head, he replied, "It is well for you, my son; for me there is nothing well." The bruised heart of Adolphus gave one bound of filial affection—but he thought of his mother, and it was checked. On the stairs he found the child watching

for him. A sudden impulse, that he was in no condition to resist or define, urged him to seize the boy, and make him the partner of his flight. It was easily executed, for the carriage waited, and his young brother followed him into it without hesitation. With almost delirious impatience, Montresor urged on the horses. It was night before they reached Portsmouth, and a fresh wind made it advisable to remain in the town; but Adolphus, madly bent on securing his prize, put off in the first boat that would take him, and joined the vessel in which he had secured a passage for himself and Lady Amesfort.

The little Algernon loved his brother, and saw nothing wonderful in his sudden journey. When Adolphus set his foot on the coast of France, his nervous dread of being pursued subsided, and he began to ask himself why he had caused new anxieties to his father and his unfortunate wife. But his mind was yet fevered; he could not think of giving up the boy; but he sent back his servant to England, to

assure the Amesforts of its safety. At the expected time the servant returned, with a note from Lord Amesfort. Adolphus shook in every nerve as he tore it open—the words swam before his dazzled eyes, and he read with difficulty:—

"MY DEAR ADOLPHUS,

"I am glad you have your young brother with you, as nothing could contribute more to preserve Lady Amesfort's character than proving to the world that you and I are not at variance. She is in a dreadful state of mind; but she will recover. I shall take her out of town immediately. I feel little disposed to resent her infatuation; and if I did, I have no right to do so. It was not wonderful that the heart I neglected to win, should become the property of another; nor, alas! is it new to me, that passion is sometimes stronger than principle. Henry is still in the North: he loves you and your sister as much as ever; and time, I hope, may conquer his prejudices. It was very bitter

to see him shrink from her whom he had chosen, because she was my daughter. But I early poisoned the draught of life, and I must drink it to its dregs.

Yours,

AMESFORT."

Montresor felt his very soul ache at the wretchedness which was not only so strongly felt at present, but must for ever continue to be so. But again in spirit he turned to his beloved mother, and he felt that he could not forgive Lord Amesfort. Then he dwelt on his own fate.—"Why," thought he, "did they conceal my birth from me? Was it to spare my mother or myself? She is too humble, too really penitent, to wish to usurp the esteem of others. Oh, it was for me alone! They thought me jealous of honour—impatient of disgrace; they felt the blight would fall on my soul. They would have spared me—and I would not be spared. The pride that was born with me, that grew with my growth, and

strengthened with my years; what is it now but a glaring inconsistency? Do I not draw my breath as it were upon sufferance?—Yes, I will renounce society, in which I have no footing; the world, in which I have no interest; my country, for I *have* no country. Its laws protect not me. I stand alone. Alas! I have sharers in my humiliation,—beings feebler than I, that cling to me, and whom I cannot protect."

Montresor indeed felt as if his haughty spirit was trampled in the dust. He who had been so indulgent, so mild, to all beneath him, was growing captious and exacting. He started from imaginary insults, and saw it was his own wounded mind that goaded him. At first it was a relief to him to scorn a world he expected would scorn him. He revenged himself on it by the keenest feeling of animosity, but he met none to injure or neglect him, and he soon learned to despise none but himself. His calmer moments had always been devoted to the instruction of the blooming Algernon, and he

promised himself that, if education could avail, his brother should not inherit the foibles so inherent in the Earl's character and his own. "He shall not," thought Montresor, "admire what is beautiful till he knows it is good; he shall not set an arbitrary value on any thing, because it suits his temper and gratifies his feelings; he shall not devote himself to others because it flatters the generosity of his nature, but because it is a duty, a cold unsatisfactory duty, to sacrifice ourselves systematically to those with whom we live." Montresor would break off his ruminations, and smile in bitterness at himself—"Who am I, that I should guide others?" And with this new feeling, he relinquished his plans and systems in despair.

CHAPTER XX.

If the wounded feelings of Adolphus Montresor stung him to madness, or crushed him in despair, she who had shared in his wanderings was scarce less deserving of compassion. The shock, the separation, the terror which her husband's presence inspired her with, were too much for a mind fevered by passion and exhausted with grief. Sometimes she struggled against the imbecile torpor that hung upon her; sometimes she took refuge, in her mental and bodily weakness, from the sharp pangs of reflection; sometimes she forgot the cause of her grief, and was conscious only of some indefinite, restless pain,—some vague, confused notion of unexpiated guilt, which her mind was not clear

enough to investigate, nor strong enough to shake off. By degrees her memory recovered its power, her understanding its tone. She awoke, by a slow and painful process, to the full knowledge of her situation; and as soon as she could reason on any thing, or feel for any body but herself, her astonishment at her husband's conduct knew no bounds. She could not suppose he would forgive her,—that he could ever care for her: she looked upon the absence of her child as a punishment, and refrained from asking about him.

She wondered what could be Lord Amesfort's reason for saving her so anxiously from a grave, where alone she felt her shame and sorrows could be concealed. She sometimes thought he must have some refined plan of vengeance to be executed in time, and almost wished she might have some outward suffering as well as the inward one that consumed her. In his presence, she felt like the malefactor before his judges; and the respite was harder to bear than could be the punishment; yet, as her

mind recovered its vigour, she lost the nervous dread that made her shrink from his very step as though it were the harbinger of death, and would gaze fearlessly on him, labouring to comprehend a gentleness so unnatural. His consistency puzzled her. He was neither stern nor affectionate; but cold and vigilant, as if he performed a task in watching over her, for which he was accountable to some one. They never remained long any where; and the carriage, in which she travelled alone with her maid, was arranged with the care and attention to her comfort necessary for an invalid.

Once or twice he changed her attendant without comment; but he took care that she should be waited upon with more respect than he exacted for himself. His carriage was always within a few yards of hers, so that escape was impossible. She felt like a child in leading-strings. But though this authority met her at every step, it did not press upon her. She could not forget he was her master; but, at least, he was not a harsh one. This despotism

was not natural to him, or why had he never exercised it before? "I do not deserve that so much trouble should be taken about me," would she say to herself; but she had no desire to contend with the bars of her prison. She was not by nature the timid creature who could kiss the rod; but her soul was humbled by the consciousness of transgression, and her spirit subdued by the weight of misery. She had never disliked her husband, and she felt unfeigned gratitude to him for having saved her from the fate she was preparing for herself. The bitterness of penitence was indeed keen; but to repent an evil intention was lighter than to repent an evil act; and she could have blessed him for having saved her the additional pang.

Many months had been already spent in wandering, when Lord Amesfort took a house for some weeks by the sea-side. He sometimes took her upon the water. He did not consult her; and the year before she would have resisted, for she was afraid of the sea; but it is

only those who are at ease who have leisure for fancies, and the Countess got into the yacht, which was before her windows, not indeed with any belief in its safety, but without any emotion of dread. A strong gale one day sprung up unexpectedly, and Lady Amesfort looked calmly on the raging billows, in which she expected to be engulphed, and almost wondered at the eagerness and activity displayed to meet the danger and overcome it. It was quite dark when they got into the boat, that tossed high and low on the foaming surge; and the Countess, who, during many hours of peril, had remained in a state of quietude approaching to apathy, could not restrain her tears when she felt herself folded in her husband's arms, to guard her from being washed overboard.

"Leave me," she cried feebly; "I do not deserve your care. I have no quarrel with death."

"Perhaps both of us may perish," calmly replied the Earl; "if so, let us at least die in charity with each other. We have not done

our duty to one another. Pardon me, Aurelia, as I have long forgiven you."

"Oh! what have I to pardon!" cried the Countess, covering her face as she spoke.

"If I had not neglected you, would you have deserted me? If I had loved you, would you have loved another?"

"God knows," replied the shuddering wife: "this I know, that I alone am to blame. I sought the love of your son before I knew I should give him mine. I urged our flight—I—"

"Be calm, Aurelia, I conjure you; if not for your sake, for mine. My shattered nerves and bleeding heart are unequal to these scenes: it is therefore I speak so little,—not from unkindness."

"What," thought the Countess, when, wet and weary, she got at last to her solitary apartment, "was he wretched?—and when I might have soothed his grief, did I inhumanly add to it? He was right not to love the giddy, frivolous girl, who shared in the splendour of his situation, but forgot to be the partner of his

grief. Perhaps I might have won his heart:— I did not even ask if he had one; and now the time is past." Either the agitation of these thoughts, or the fatigue of the expedition, affected Lady Amesfort's health so far as to require medical assistance. Although she had often thought herself dying of late, and was subject to frequent faintings and low fever, her husband had never called in the faculty; but now judging the disease might be bodily, he had recourse to it; and, much sooner than he expected, the invalid left her bed for the sofa in the drawing-room. The kindness with which her recovery was greeted, was very painful to the unhappy Countess. She was used to her husband's coldness, and saw in it no new reproach; but in his softened manner, in his tone of affection, she traced a likeness at which she shuddered. When the Earl tried to smile, when he looked on her with interest, it was the image of his son, and she felt that punishment was at her right hand, let her fly from it as she would.

About this time, Lord Amesfort received a very spirited sketch of his boy which Adolphus sent, as a good likeness. He placed it in the apartment of the Countess, who wept and prayed beside it during the night, and confirmed herself in the idea, it was all she should ever see of her son. "Yet," murmured she, "he forgave me; but he does not think me worthy to see my Algernon—and he is right."

Lord Amesfort was grieved to perceive the evil his present had produced. "I thought to give you pleasure," he said; "are you not glad to know our child is well?"

Lady Amesfort was pale already, but she grew whiter still, and wildly clasping her hands, she threw herself at her husband's feet. "Have mercy!" she cried; "do not kill me with a kindness I do not deserve; but tell me where my Algernon is—tell me if he is suffered to breathe the same air with his guilty mother."

Lord Amesfort groaned in agony; the last time he had seen a woman, young and beautiful, kneel to him in wretchedness, was ever

present to his mind,—it was his own devoted, dearly loved Emily; and though his heart seemed scarred, he could not bear the scars to be touched. He trembled as he raised his wife, and scarce had power to say, "If you knew how you hurt me, Aurelia, you would learn to exercise a little more self-control. My sons are together, and I am content it should be so, since it cannot injure the one, and may benefit the other. When Adolphus wearies of rambling, he will bring back his brother; and if he does not, I will go and fetch him."

He paused; but seeing his wife stand, overcome with the allusion to Montresor, and bowed down with burning shame, he added, in a tone of sympathy, "I implore you, try to regulate your feelings better. We cannot always lead this life; and when you appear again in the world, I must not have it guessed that you are wretched. Self-reproach is hard to bear; yet I have borne it for many years, and so must you."

"This, then, is the punishment allotted me,"

thought the Countess, when left alone. "I must boldly put on the mask of innocence, and stand among the wise and good, feeling that I do not belong to them. When the voice of sin and misery is raised to me, I must seem to turn aside—I, who am more miserable, and far more guilty! I shall listen to eulogiums, while my heart will bear witness to me that I do not deserve them. I shall mingle with my fellow-creatures, shrinking from their usurped esteem, and blushing at approbation, which is conferred only because they do not know me. I shall smile, too, for so wills my husband. Good heavens! will so wretched a mockery deceive any one! for how many years may I be doomed to play this false part?"—and the Countess thought, with horror, how young she still was. Her repentance, however, was sincere, and expiation is its test. She had nothing left to do, but to obey her husband's wishes; and she seriously laboured to acquire that mastery over herself, which was necessary to enable her, however inadequately, to fulfil them. She

forced herself to address the sailors, or the poor people, whom she met; she asked them questions, and tried to listen to their answers. At first, the words died on her lips, and she hastily threw down her veil to conceal the starting tears; but her husband saw her struggles, and appreciated them: what would she not have done to gain one step, however low, in his good opinion? The rich reward spurred her sometimes on to exertions beyond her strength. When she found a renewal of her weakness, her soul seemed to die within her. She would reproach herself for requiting so ill his unwearied indulgence: she would long to have some other task set her, that would not exceed her powers.

"Aurelia," said the Earl one morning, "there is a trial awaiting your firmness. Show me that I have not given you credit for more than you possess:"—and he put into her hands a letter from Algernon. It was written on such large lines, that it did not contain many words, but a thick mist spread itself over the eyes of

the Countess, and she could not read them; she felt very faint, but she would not give way. She turned towards the open window; she forced a few drops of water down her throat, though it seemed to close against them; she covered her eyes till her head was less dizzy—but it would not do. "Keep it for me," said she at last, "till I can read it:" and though the hand that held it out trembled violently, she spoke distinctly, and did not shed a tear. Lord Amesfort was satisfied with the effort; he left her the letter,—assuring her that she would find the benefit of her combat, and that the habit of conquering herself, once acquired, would spare her many an unavailing pang. His wife received not the consolation he sought to inspire her with: she had but one idea, "He chooses it,"—and to this she sacrificed herself, without a hope that present travail would produce to her any future peace.

It was some time after this, that Montresor found among his English packets a letter from Lord De Calmer. It was one of the enclosures

from Lord Amesfort; for, had it been directed by himself, he was pretty well aware, it would have been returned unopened. As it was, Adolphus felt strongly inclined to put it in a blank sheet of paper and direct it back; but he did not even know where he was; and after much fluctuation, he read:—

"Do not throw this from you, my dear Adolphus, the moment you recognize the writing. I confess, it would be no more than I deserve. I have been unjust and weak; but I have never ceased to love you, or to prize your friendship as I ought. Do not, then, tell me I have forfeited it by my conduct. I would not have dared to claim it, had I not come to the resolution of sacrificing all my absurd prejudices at that shrine where you know my heart has long been surrendered. To-morrow I set out for Wales; and if my beloved Emily can pardon so protracted a journey, I shall soon hail for my brother an old friend, though a new-found cousin. It is so long since you have known

any thing about me, that I must take up my explanation from the moment of my return from Spain. My tedious weakness, as you must have seen, alone delayed my journey to Wales at that time. It is a very foolish thing, I begin to think, to consult any one about one's concerns. If I had not talked openly to you of my attachment, I should not have left England without being engaged to your sister, and then I should have felt bound to fulfil that engagement, and many a heart-ache it would have saved me. If I had not spoken to my uncle, he would not have said any thing to me, and you should have danced at my wedding long ago. My evil stars settled it otherwise.

"I pass over my conversations with the Earl, as much in regard to my own feelings, as to yours; they certainly made me very miserable, and the more so, from the bar which your ignorance on the subject placed between us. My uncle absolutely forbad my disclosing to you our relationship, and I had no right over his secrets. Yet, how was I to explain to

you the inconsistency of my being one day ready to fly to Emily, though I was scarce able to stand, and the next doing my best to forget her? I knew, indeed, you had generosity enough to pity and excuse my inconstancy; but I was not inconstant, and I could not live with you with a veiled heart. So I avoided you from weakness; for if I could have determined upon any thing—have traced any plan of conduct, and steadily pursued it, I need not have given up my friend in the base and brutal manner in which I did it. With any self-command, I could have been with you as usual, upon all subjects save one; but that one was so interesting to both of us, that to avoid it always, was more than I had resolution to say I could do. To drown thought, I plunged into dissipation; I threw away on things that gave me no pleasure more than the half of my fortune. I drank, I gamed, I went on the turf; but I met neither you nor Emily, except in my dreams, and they reproached me with deserting the only things I could love.

"My uncle watched over me, and when I had tried what extravagance and folly could do for me, he led me gently back to reason and employment. I was not happy, but I thought I had decided. I lived alone with Nature, and tried to school my own heart, and clear up the mists that obscured my understanding. I fancied myself calm; it was only a trance, from which a letter from Isabella Albany roused me. Every thing she said was, as usual, clear and forcible. I followed her advice in seeking out my uncle and his unfortunate wife. I would not make your heart bleed afresh, by trying to describe what mine suffered at beholding her. At first, the sight of me, as connected with other times, threatened to destroy all the advantage she had reaped from the incessant care of her husband; but, after a time, I thought her relieved by our conversations. We concealed nothing from one another, and she implored me to discard prejudices from which I had already suffered so much, and which perhaps had given Emily as much pain as myself. This thought

determined me; and before you receive this, I shall know if I may yet hope for a happiness with which I have been so long trifling. I do not desire that you should write to me; but will you not to your sister? Isabella tells me, Mrs. Montresor has heard but *once* from you: surely yours is not the hand to punish her.

"Your affectionate friend and cousin,

"DE CALMER."

Many and various were the feelings that contended for a mastery in the breast of Adolphus, whilst he perused this explanatory epistle; those of pleasure, at last, predominated: but even the joy of Montresor was connected with grief and anxiety. He felt that De Calmer was, after all, acting against his own feelings and principles; that he had been swayed by others to return to Emily, and might some day repent it. He could not think, without emotion, that it was to Lady Amesfort he should be principally indebted for his sister's establishment in life. In that establishment, it was Emily's happiness

alone he had once thought of: now that her dubious situation was known to him, her respectability seemed, in a great measure, to hang upon it. Her reputation, in the delicate predicament in which she stood, was indeed as a thin vapour that would melt away before the first breath of slander, and the wounded pride of her brother made him impatient to marry her out of it, to any one almost, that could give her a certain name and a fixed footing in society. Upon the whole, he was content to rejoice, that one ray of comfort would fall on his mother; and, for the first time, for many years, he addressed her in the form of congratulation.

The playful Algernon, who interrupted him at this occupation, soon detected the unwonted smile hovering round his mouth and lurking in his eye, and he eagerly took advantage of it to prefer a request. There was a dance on the soft turf, beneath the spreading alders, in honour of a village lass who was that day affianced to a neighbouring peasant. The young girl was portioned by Madame De Saumur, with whose

family Adolphus had been unable to avoid a slight acquaintance; and that lady, having met Algernon, commissioned him to fetch Montresor to the *fête*. It was a brilliant summer's evening, and Adolphus had not the heart to disappoint his brother, though even rural festivity had become more than distasteful to him. He went; he even danced with the affianced bride, at the request of her patroness. Madame De Saumur in vain rallied him on his joyless air, and asked if even the pure climate of southern France had no effect upon him, and if he was too much of an Englishman to condescend to be amused. He answered courteously, and smiled as he turned from her; but she felt it was not the smile of hilarity, and she blessed her stars that she was not born in England.

Lord Amesfort had empowered people to sell out of the army for his son, and he now proposed to him to embrace some other profession, in which his talents might bring him fame. He offered him his powerful interest to advance him in the diplomatic line, for which his education

had particularly fitted him. He pointed out, with that persuasive eloquence which none possessed like him, the folly of burying himself in a selfish retreat; he tried to excite a laudable ambition in his palsied mind; he insinuated that, having his name to establish, and his fortune to make, by his own exertions, unaided by the ordinary advantages with which others were born, he could not afford to waste his best years in idleness. Montresor knew his father was right; but the wounds were yet bare in his sensitive breast; his strength was wasted, and he looked in vain for the energy and self command, that could grapple with the disgrace that had fastened on him, wrestle with the world, and force it to retract its unfounded scorn. "No," thought he, "it will not be; the stain is upon me, and, if others forget it, I shall feel it still." He was doomed to feel it yet more keenly, for hitherto his sufferings on that head sprung from his imagination: he did not guess how soon the actual proof would come.

Colonel and Mrs. Dessamere had squandered

away so much money, that they found it necessary to go abroad to economize. Their economy on the Continent was very like their economy in their native Island; but they escaped long bills for the present; they amused themselves, and they had the pleasure of talking of their prudence in the vigorous retrenchment they had effected. Their road lay through the romantic village where Adolphus had for some time fixed his residence; they were delighted to find a relation and a countryman,—for at that time all France was not overrun with English, as it has been since. They remained some time in that part of the province; for there were many things to see, and many people to visit; Augusta's former residence abroad having procured her a variety of acquaintance, who gladly furnished her with letters of introduction to people of any note.

Adolphus was so frequently seen riding and walking with the Dessameres, that he gradually found himself caught by the current of society, and frequently unable to escape the polite im-

portunities of the neighbouring gentlemen to meet his cousins at their house. The handsome Englishman, as he was called, soon attracted universal notice. His polished manners, his general information, his unvarying sadness, which appeared yet more in his smile than in his abstracted silence, produced a wonderful sensation. The learned men referred to him in matters of science, the unlearned in matters of taste, the old ladies consulted him about their complaints, and the damsels studied "Young's Night Thoughts," that they might lay in a store of fine gloom for their conversations with the melancholy Englishman. Wherever Adolphus had been placed, circumstances had always arisen to give him a peculiar interest in the eyes of others. Accustomed to be caressed and courted, he saw nothing singular in the attention paid him by his new acquaintance; and would not, perhaps, have marked their extent, had they not been suddenly withdrawn. Mrs. Dessamere had, very unintentionally, been the cause of the change he soon per-

ceived. With her usual giddiness, she had said, in a numerous company, where she had been persecuted with questions about Adolphus, that his mother was her father's first-cousin; but that who his father was, she could not say, having never either seen or heard of him; unless indeed they chose to take the scandalous chronicle for gospel, which gave him Lord Amesfort for a father. Whisperings instantly ran round the room, coteries of decorous provincial ladies formed themselves rapidly to take into consideration the propriety of holding any further communication with the young foreigner. The prejudice against illegitimacy is much stronger in France than in England; and although some young people, more liberal or more compassionate, tried to stem the torrent, the veto was agreed upon by the majority, and the rest consented to the interdict passed on the stranger.

Totally unconscious of all this, Montresor spent his time much as he had done before the Dessameres fell in his way, rather glad that

their departure had restored him to solitude. The arrival of some comedians in the neighbouring city set every one in motion; and as Algernon begged very hard to go and see them perform, and his brother did not like to trust him with a servant, or indeed out of his own sight, he appeared on the third night of their performance. There were many people in the house, with whom Adolphus had become slightly acquainted; but, as they did not appear to see him, he was better pleased to remain unnoticed. To Madame de Saumur, indeed, from whom he had received much civility, he bowed on entering; but the distant manner in which his bow was returned, gave him no encouragement to join her party, had he been so disposed, which indeed he was not. There was nothing very attractive in the play or the actors; and probably, had both been better, they would have amused Adolphus as little. Towards the end of the entertainment a young girl came on, who was received with evident disapprobation. The actress was terrified; yet she endeavoured in calmer moments

to begin her part, but was as frequently stopped. The Englishman was roused by the clamour, and, taking pity on the youth and apparent timidity of the girl, asked those around him why she was condemned unheard. He could not gain a very distinct account; every one spoke at once; but one thing seemed agreed upon by all,—that it was private resentment that raised the outcry, which had nothing to do with the talents or good conduct of the actress in her profession. Montresor thought this equally unjust and barbarous; and the tears of the unfortunate performer having extorted a few feeble plaudits, he strongly supported them, and even stood up in the box to give his applause with more effect.

The clamorous party now turned their resentment from the fair one to her unexpected champion, and the scene of confusion that ensued forced the female part of the audience to withdraw. Adolphus, who had no desire to become a prominent character in a playhouse row at any time, but particularly when he was wanted

to take care of his brother, followed their steps. He found Madame de Saumur and her daughters waiting for their carriage, which could not draw up, owing to the bustle and confusion which had spread into the street. Leaving Algernon in their care, he forced his way through the mob to seek it out, and see if a little order could be restored. He succeeded with some difficulty, and was handing the ladies into their carriage, when a gentleman of their party, coming out, pushed rudely past him, muttering some words which, to judge by the tone, were not meant to be conciliatory. He was gone before Montresor could understand the drift of the incivility, or quite make up his mind as to its having been purposely directed to himself. He did not remain long in suspense; for the next morning, as he was walking with his gun in his hand over the Saumur property, Algernon following him in great triumph at being mounted on a pony, he fell in with a party of sportsmen, one of whom asked him roughly, by whose leave he was carrying a

gun there. Montresor almost immediately recognized in the speaker the gentleman of the night before, and little disposed to brook insult, he returned the question by another. "By what authority do you ask me?"

"I do not," contemptuously returned the other, "give an account of myself to my inferiors."

"Nor I, to any one," rejoined Adolphus; "particularly when I do not know who does me the honour of asking it."

The Frenchman sprung forward, and with action of haughty insolence, exclaimed, "I am the Marquis de Vivier—now pray, Sir, who are you?"

"One who cannot acknowledge in M. de Vivier, or any other person, the right so to question him."

"It is wise in the nameless to wrap themselves in mystery; but remember, Mr. Unknown, I shall not choose again to meet you in my aunt's grounds."

"M. le Marquis may easily avoid that, by not coming there himself."

"Shall I be bearded thus by an obscure stranger?" cried the enraged Frenchman, and his party instantly came forward, and in various tones, and with different modifications, declared an apology was necessary. Montresor waited calmly till the storm of tongues had subsided, to declare not only that he saw no necessity for an apology, but rather deemed, that if any were made, it should be to himself, who passing on without any desire to molest them, had been wantonly attacked by them. M. De Vivier angrily exclaimed, "No satisfaction could be demanded of him, other than sending him out of the kingdom;" but one of his companions called out, "You forgot, Monsieur is in the army, and therefore nothing need prevent your taking satisfaction in a gentleman-like way."

"That requires proof," sneeringly replied the Marquis, "as indeed every thing does about Monsieur."

" Adolphus quietly took a letter out of his pocket, and handed it over to the gentleman who had interfered. It was directed by the French ambassador in London, with whom he was personally acquainted, and was a brief but polite communication, which Lord Amesfort had begged him to give the earliest information of, to Adolphus. The sportsmen looked at one another, and began to think they had been much misled on the score of the Englishman's situation. M. De Landes returned the letter, observing, " In this case it remains only to be settled where you meet, M. De Vivier Will you permit me the honour of being your second."

" Willingly," replied Adolphus, " and leave to you the settling of time and place, of which you will kindly inform me;" and bowing slightly to the party, he led on his brother's pony, and was quickly out of sight. The subject was then loudly canvassed. Every one was of a different opinion from his neighbour; and, after much talking, every one remained in full pos-

session of his own, without having influenced that of any other person. As Adolphus turned into the field which led to his dwelling, he perceived the youngest of Madame de Saumur's daughters alone.

"You are far from home, Mademoiselle Julienne," said he, as he passed her. "Have you missed your way, and will you allow me the pleasure of setting you right?"

"I am quite right since I have found you," said she eagerly; "but I am very weary, so I hope you are going home, and then you shall know why I am rambling over the country by myself."

Julienne was a lively girl, just entering her teens, but low in stature and infantine in manner, which gave her an appearance more youthful than her years. Having a very quick conception, she turned this to account, and said and did whatever she chose, satisfied that her family would say, "It is only the child." She had heard her sisters speak of the tumult at the Theatre on the pre-

ceding night, and her curiosity to know from whence arose the bitterness of her cousins towards the young Englishman, roused her attention to every trifle. She soon got to the bottom of the business, and while her married sister made matters worse, by defending and applauding Montresor, she sat considering how she could save him any further trouble. She foresaw that the sportsmen meeting him must produce a quarrel, which would probably end in a duel, and she thought if she could keep him at home this day, the storm might blow over, and that by insinuating how much her mother would be hurt should any altercation between himself and her nephew take place, he might be prepared for moderation in future. She did not want an excuse for her walk, for some time ago Adolphus had promised to get her seeds of some rare flower, from England; and had this not been the case, Julienne's wits were sharp enough to forge one that would answer every purpose as well—so taking her *Bonne* with her, she sallied forth on her ex-

pedition. The old woman frequently remonstrated on the needless length of their walk, but Julienne was deaf to all she could urge. She had already said more than once, "only another field, dear *Bonne*," when the attendant growing sulky, as she saw no end to the fields, sat down to rest herself, as she said.

Adolphus, who did not feel that Madame De Saumur would rejoice at hearing that her daughter, young as she was, had paid him a visit by herself, was relieved at sight of Mademoiselle Blumar, and pressed her to rest herself at his house.

"*Monsieur est bien honnête*," said the old woman, recovering her good humour at the unexpected attention of a handsome cavalier, and readily acceded to the request. As she passed on, leaning in triumph on the proffered arm of Montresor, Julienne chatted to Algernon, asking him, with apparent simplicity, which way he had been riding, and whom he had met. Julienne saw by his answers that she was too late, and the person to watch now seemed

rather to be M. De Vivier. She never once alluded, therefore, to the object of her visit, when she found herself in Montresor's cheerful parlour, but employed her time in compassionating the fatigue of her *Bonne*, or in rummaging the books and drawings scattered on the table, to find verses, which she asserted the Englishman had written in her praise. Adolphus smiled, and assured her he was no poet; but she told him she had made many, and would not despair of having the same effect on him. "What a strange mixture of childishness and coquetry," thought he, as he returned from conducting Julienne de Saumur through his little garden, which was her nearest way home; "how unlike an English child!"

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME

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